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Pierre Julien Eymard




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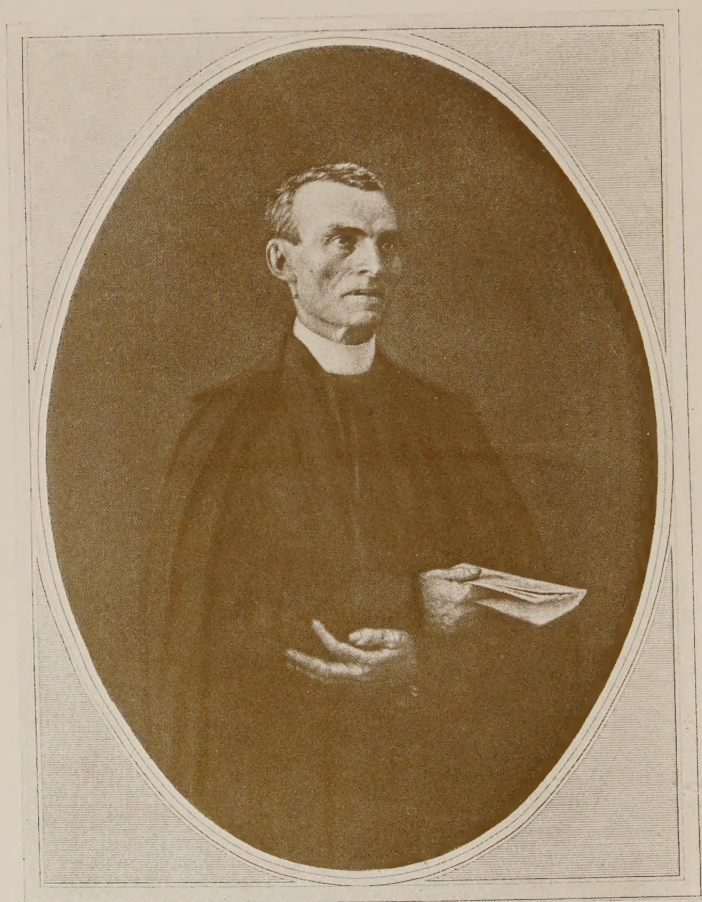








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VENERABLE PIERRE JULIEN EYMARD  
Priest of the Eucharist

Venerable Pierre Julien Eymard

THE

Priest of the Eucharist

FOUNDER OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE  
FATHERS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT



TAKEN FROM

Documents on His Life and Virtues

BY THE

POSTULATOR OF HIS CAUSE

REVEREND EDMOND TENAILLON, S.S.S.

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*Censor.*

**Imprimatur**

JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY.  
*Archbishop of New York.*

New York, February 27, 1914.

THE FRANK MEANY CO., PRINTERS, INC.  
216-222 WEST 18TH STREET  
NEW YORK

In conformity with the Decree of Pope Urban VIII, the author declares that he intends to give to the facts contained in this work a purely human sense, and that by any expressions of praise and titles of reverence used therein there is no intention to forestall the decisions of Holy Church, to which as a faithful son he submits his judgment.



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## FOREWORD.

**B**Y giving to the public the present Life of Venerable Père Eymard the publishers have added to Eucharistic literature a volume of no little interest. It opens to our gaze the secret recesses of a soul who, to purchase "the pearl of great price in the monstrance set," gave all that he had. He relinquished home; family, the closest spiritual friendships, health, life itself to possess what to him was the one thing necessary—Jesus Hostia.

The following pages reveal the workings of grace in one whom the Holy Spirit led to most exalted heights of love divine. While living in closest mystic union with his Divine Master, Père Eymard also taught others to love and serve devotedly Him who so craves the affection of men. For this ardent apostle the Blessed Sacrament was more than a mere Presence. It was the living personality of Jesus of Nazareth with His oft-repeated "Come to Me."

Very aptly has Père Eymard been called "the Priest of the Eucharist." He is still in our midst, exerting his uplifting influence over souls by the work of his zealous spiritual sons, the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament. This Society has placed before English readers the four volumes from Père Eymard's pen which portray his character more clearly than any mere *Life* could do. Still a short account of the incidents of his fifty-seven years will cause readers of these pages to delve more deeply into his writings and there learn the secret of becoming adorers in spirit and in truth. Such is his message to us of the twentieth century,

a message which is fraught with much meaning if we would respond to the pleadings of the Sacred Heart in these days of daily Communion and annual Eucharistic Congresses.

May this volume accomplish the one aim of Venerable Père Eymard's life: "*Adveniat Regnum Tuum Eucharisticum!*"

S. J. F.

March 13, 1914.

# Venerable Pierre Julien Eymard

## THE PRIEST OF THE EUCHARIST

FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETY OF THE MOST BLESSED  
SACRAMENT.

### I

#### *Birth and Early Youth.*

“**W**ITH what love God has loved me! He has, as it were, led me by the hand to the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament. All His graces have been graces of preparation, and the Blessed Sacrament has dominated my whole life. The Most Blessed Virgin Mary strengthened this affection in me. She herself gave me Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.” These are Venerable Père Eymard’s own words.

The end that we propose to ourselves in this sketch is, as the title indicates, to make known the Founder of the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Apostle of the Eucharist.

A rapid glance over the past will reveal to us, and not without great profit to ourselves, the commencement of and the favors bestowed on the Order of the Blessed Sacrament, whose complete expansion we behold even during the last years of Venerable Père Eymard.

Pierre Julien Eymard was born February 4, 1811, at La Mure, on L’Isère, a little town in the diocese of Grenoble. His family was profoundly Christian. His

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grandfather was held in high consideration, and Jules Eymard, the father of the subject of this sketch, was equally faithful in the observance of the laws of Holy Mother Church. Full of energy and naturally very clever, he was engaged at one and the same time in the different occupations of cutlery and the oil-press.

By a first marriage, he had one daughter named Marianne. In 1804, he contracted a second marriage, at Frenay (Oisans), with Marie Madeleine Pelorce, who rivalled her good husband in piety and wisdom.

The Reverend M. Col, since deceased in the odor of sanctity was at this time the Curé of Oisans. He predicted to the pious couple that of their marriage would be born a son, who would become a priest and the Founder of a new Religious Order devoted to the Most Blessed Sacrament. They had successively three sons, who all died in baptismal innocence. The fourth was the child of promise. While his mother bore him in her womb, she never ceased consecrating him to Jesus Christ and begging that the child's whole life might be devoted to His divine service. The day after his birth, he received in Baptism the name of Pierre Julien. May we not see in this name a predisposition of Divine Providence? *Petrus*, which signifies *rock*, and it was upon this rock that Jesus Christ was to establish His Eucharistic Throne, and perpetuate the feast of Corpus Christi, begun in the Church by Saint Julienne. The child conceived a great devotion to his two patrons, as also to his mother's patroness, Saint Mary Magdalen, who had so ardently loved the Saviour of the world. The relations of little Pierre with the Blessed Sacrament date from his tenderest infancy. While still at her breast, his mother often



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carried him to the church, and above all when the bell called to Benediction, she hastened to the sacred edifice to offer her child to God.

As the boy grew older, his greatest joy was to accompany his good mother in her frequent visits to the tabernacle. Never did he grow tired, never did he ask his mother's permission to leave the church before her, no matter how long she continued her devotions. In later years, Père Eymard used to say that those multiplied visits were for him a source of superabundant graces, and that a similar practice should be recommended to all Christian mothers. Soon however his mother's devotion, great as it was, failed to satisfy him. He embraced every occasion that presented itself to escape her vigilance, and make his way to the church. Powerfully attracted to the Presence of the hidden God, he always tried to get as near to Jesus as he possibly could. He even ventured into the sanctuary, and there climbed up behind the altar on a little step-ladder. In this attitude he remained for a long time, his little head resting against the tabernacle. Once he was surprised in his position, his hands joined, his eyes fixed on the tabernacle.

"What are you doing there?" they asked him.

"Saying my prayers," was the answer. "Here I am nearer to Jesus, to speak to Him and to listen to Him."

Another day, taking off his shoes, with a rope around his neck and a wax candle in his hand, he went to beg pardon of Our Lord.

The demon, without doubt, foresaw that this child would snatch many souls from him, and so he tried to strangle him in his cradle. This was told by Ven-

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erable Père Eymard himself to his intimate friend Père Mayet.

"While still quite young," he said, "I felt a heavy hand seize me by the throat and try to strangle me. I cried out for help, and I even caught the hand that was squeezing my throat. My father, hearing my cries, came in all haste and quieted me. They never put any faith in what I said on this point, but the remembrance is still so deeply impressed on my mind that it seems to me that it happened only a short time ago. I was then only five years old."

We have said that Père Eymard had a sister named Marianne, who was like a second mother to the boy, being twelve years his senior. Her example and advice contributed much to developing his piety. They loved each other very dearly. Once when Marianne had had a little disagreement with her step-mother, Pierre began to sob and weep, begging his father not to scold her, reminding him of how hard she worked, and how faithfully she gave him all her wages. The child had already remarked this, although he was then only four years old. One year later, he felicitated his sister on her great progress in perfection. "How happy you are," he said to her, "to approach the Holy Table so often! Offer a Communion for me, I beg of you."

"What shall I then ask God for you?" she inquired.

"Ask that I may always be meek, chaste, and pure, and that some day I may become a priest?"

He assisted at the Holy sacrifice every day and so happy was he to serve the Mass, that he would have wished never to share that task with another. He had also great devotion to the Way of the Cross,

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which he made several times in the week, kneeling on the stone flags, and kissing the ground at each station, or, when he thought himself alone, his arms in the form of a cross. Even his games and recreations were made up of piety. It was his delight to erect little altars and to imitate the Church ceremonies. He used to take his little companions into the fields where, at certain distances, he planted crosses formed of the branches of trees, and there all very earnestly made the Way of the Cross.

One day, a rope around his neck, he entered the parish church at a time when he thought he should be alone and unobserved. There as he was making his Act of Reparation before the tabernacle, a lady devotee perceived him, and was shocked at what she thought irreverence in the child. Coming forward in her holy zeal, she scolded him roundly. The pious and precious repairer of God's honor, at once disarmed her anger with the words spoken in a gentle and humble tone: "Oh! madame, I am not amusing myself. I am saying my prayers. I am making reparation to God."

Here is another characteristic incident related by one of little Julien's playmates. She says: "My father lived next door to the Eymards. My sisters and I were his childhood companions, but what a distance between him and us in piety and seriousness! His father had an oil-press in his house, and little Julien, only nine years old, used to manage it himself. My sisters and I with another little girl used often to beg him to give us a little of the nut cakes left by the oil-press, for we were very fond of them. But as his conscience was very delicate, he was not willing to do

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so. 'See how you embarrass me,' he would say: 'These cakes do not belong to me.' When we insisted, he would permit us to take a little on condition that we would pay attention to what he was going to read to us, and that we would recite the Rosary with him.

"Then over his oily clothes, he put on a kind of surplice that he had made for himself, and around his neck a cord to the end of which was attached a Crucifix. Then he would say: 'Come, young ladies, no laughing! We are going to say our prayers.'

"He would then open a closet in which stood a large Crucifix and a statue of the Blessed Virgin, and we set to work to pray. Sometimes instead of reading to us, he preached.

"My father was very fond of him, because he was so remarkable a child, so serious, so well-behaved, and he used to trust us with him, saying: 'Do you see these three little giddy-heads? I trust them with you. I put them under your care'—and Julien would tell us stories by the hour to keep us quiet.

"Once during Carnival, while still a child, he gathered us together with several other little girls, and gravely addressed us: 'To-day,' he said, 'many sins will be committed. As reparation for what is going on outside let us dig a grave. We'll put one of you into it on a board, and by that burial, we will mean to bury all the sins that will be committed.'

"One of the little girls remained some time in the hole, and eight days later she was really dead, which fact made a deep impression on us."

The following incident was related by Père Eymard himself in 1865, after his return from Rome. The one to whom he told it laughingly has given it to us:

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"One day when I was very young, I passed a second-hand shop in one of the streets of La Mure. As I glanced inside I saw a soldier's pompon, such as they wore in the time of Napoleon Bonaparte. I was instantly seized with the desire to possess it and, seeing no one in the shop, I ran in, snatched it up, and took it off home with me. But no sooner had I reached the house than I was overcome by remorse. I carried it back quickly and, peering around to make sure that no one saw me, I threw it in hurriedly and ran off." And the good religious added: "That is perhaps the greatest sin of my life."

As soon as he was old enough he was sent to school, where he remained until his twelfth year, an example of modesty and application to study for all his companions. If sometimes a coarse word escaped their lips, he would say: "Stop that! Be silent! It is not nice in you and, besides, it is displeasing to the good God." If they were larger and stronger than himself, he would write to them as soon as he returned home from school: "If you go on speaking in my presence as you have done, understand that I will have nothing more to do with you, for it gives me too much pain." Soon he exercised over them so great an influence that even the boldest restrained themselves before him and carefully avoided whatever might wound his delicate conscience.

The thought of the priesthood spurred him on in his studies. Once he went very simply to the Curé and said to him: "M. le Curé, will you teach me my lesson? I want to be a priest." "What book have you?" asked the good Curé. "My treatise on politeness," answered the child. It was a Gothic manuscript, the *ne plus*



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*ultra* of the scholars of his day. He added that he wanted to go to Rome to kiss the feet of the Holy Father, and obtain the pardon of all his sins. His sins! He himself acknowledged his great trouble every time he had to go to confession, for he knew not what to tell. He was inconsolable over this, and he used to say: "If I never commit sins, I shall no longer have the happiness of going to confession." He then recalled two rude words that he had pronounced, and took them to the confessional. His sister declared that she never saw him disobey but twice, and then he at once accused himself, promising that he would do so no more. One was his searching for something his mother had purposely hidden from him, and the other was his going to the Calvary which overlooked La Mure, in spite of her orders to the contrary.

At the age of four or five, he did something that his mother called silly. As he remembered that his father had once corrected him on a like occasion, he thought that punishment must always follow the fault. Handing the switch to him, he said: "*Papa, I have done something silly. Punish me.*" His mother could not restrain her tears. His sister added: "He always led a pure and irreprehensible life. I never saw him commit a voluntary venial sin."

First Communion was for Pierre Julien a decisive moment. Oh, with what care he prepared for it! During the catechetical instructions he could not restrain his tears, and he was astonished at not seeing his companions equally touched. When he mentioned it to them, they replied that they could not weep as he did. Ah, that is a privilege given only to chaste and

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deeply earnest souls! To angelic purity he joined sincere penance and mortification. He fasted during a whole lent, secretly giving his breakfast to the poor, and sleeping on a plank. It was at this period of his life that he used to go barefoot to pray at the Calvary of "La Mure." Once, as he afterward related, he tried to imitate all that he had read about the saints. "Oh, how much I loved the good God when I was little. I would not have offended Him for all the gold in the world!"

At last came the morning of the great day, March 16, 1823. "How many graces," he says, "did Our Lord grant me at my First Communion! Then it was that my conversion was sincere and entire. At the moment I received Jesus into my breast, I said to Him: One day I will be a priest. I promise Thee!" Oh, admirable promise! He did not say, "I ask it of Thee," but "*I promise Thee!*" He seemed, as it were, to have a presentiment of all that it was going to cost him to realize his desire. His devotion to the Blessed Virgin was ardent. While still a child, he went to cast himself at Mary's feet, a coarse rope around his neck, and thus consecrated himself to that good Mother. It was to her that he confided the success of his cherished enterprise. At the age of ten, he went on foot to the chapel of Notre-Dame de Laus, about fifteen miles from Mure, there to find out his vocation. He returned with the irrevocable resolution of becoming a priest. The Blessed Virgin gave him the assurance of her protection in an extraordinary manner. Doubtless, she appeared to him. Discreet as he was, he rarely spoke of himself and of his good qualities, yet once or twice he dropped a few words

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which might lead to this opinion. When one lives with another, he himself has said when speaking of his own communication with Our Lord, one ends by finding out all that he thinks. It was by such remarks that he betrayed himself, so to say. Speaking once of the pilgrimages to Laus which he had made during his childhood, he said: "One kisses the ground the moment that venerable church comes in view." "And why?" "Because there the Blessed Virgin is so kind. There—there one can *see* her!" Then he blushed, appeared annoyed and became silent. Again, these words escaped him: "Oh! at Laus, there one *sees* the Blessed Virgin!" and immediately added: "Ah! I have said too much." All this naturally betrayed his secret. It was at this time he had special need of Mary's maternal protection to lead him to the priesthood, for multiplied obstacles were then confronting him. His father constantly opposed the boy's desires and vocation, and refused him the means of making the necessary studies. His only idea was to secure the assistance of his son, and later on to behold him taking his own place as a cutler and oil-presser. But He who had snatched David from the midst of his father's sheep to place him over His people, drew to His Heart this youth to make him the Apostle of Eucharistic Love.

Love triumphs over all obstacles. With his little savings, Pierre purchased an old Latin grammar and from it learned the rudiments of the language. From time to time, he would ask an explanation from some one or other of the seminarians who were spending their vacation in his neighborhood. Meanwhile he continued his work at the oil-press, though studying

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in secret. But he found his progress unsatisfactory, so he humbled himself so far as to ask admission into a boarding-school as a poor scholar, and this he obtained. There he received some little instruction for which he paid by domestic services.

Shortly after he entered the home of a priest of Grenoble where, in consideration of his services, he received lessons in Latin. In about two years, he returned to La Mure. There he continued his studies, though without a teacher, but translating the Latin authors, and examining his own work by means of the vernacular editions which he procured for the purpose.

It was during this time that he lost his good mother. On learning the news of her death, which was announced to him without the least preparation, he hastened to throw himself at the feet of the Blessed Virgin, begging her to take him for her child. She did indeed hearken to the request.

Pierre's courage moreover was unshaken. On a certain day, he thought he had attained the end of his desires. His father consented to allow him to enter among the Oblates of Mary, but unfortunately a new trial awaited him. After ten months of novitiate, a dangerous sickness led him back to his father's house, where he remained for two whole years always ill, but confiding in Mary's goodness. Once when he was thought to be in his agony, some one said to him that now he must give up his idea of becoming a priest. But he exclaimed with all the strength of which he was capable: "*I will be a priest! I will offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!*"

Pierre Julien had attained his twentieth year when he lost his father. Free now to follow his vocation, he

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presented himself though still very weak, at the *Grand Séminaire* of Grenoble. He was received, and after three years, was ordained to the priesthood, July 20, 1834. Without delay he hastened to cast himself at the feet of the Blessed Virgin in the church of Notre-Dame à l'Osier. There it was that he celebrated his first Mass all alone, without even the presence of his good sister, all alone with Jesus and Mary! He always said that he owed absolutely everything to Mary, that she had been his professor in all his studies, theology excepted, for that was the only branch in which he had followed the regular course.



## II

### PRIESTHOOD. SOCIETY OF MARY

**A**S a priest, Père Eymard appeared to live only for the Most Blessed Sacrament. Several times during the day he went to visit Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and lay before Him all his plans and resolutions. He always found time for God and the neighbor. At Chatte and at Monteynard he discharged wonderfully well his duties as a priest, and his memory is still faithfully preserved in those places. He took greatly to heart the welfare of his parishioners, interesting himself in their labors and sharing their joys and sorrows, and his knowledge of medicine, limited though it was, he frequently found very useful among his poor people, who were always his favored charge. He did what he could to help them in every conjuncture, even going so far as to bestow upon them his sister's clothing. "I had to hide the money necessary for our household expenses," the pious young girl tells us, "and I thought myself very fortunate when his charity failed to discover my hidden treasure."

When one day her brother had given his last coin to the poor, Marianne asked him: "What are we going to eat?" "What?" he exclaimed. "Oh, we still have some cheese! Isn't that enough?"

In five years Père Eymard had come to know all the difficulties attendant on his sacred functions as a priest, and he fully comprehended its duties and its dangers.

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During his Retreat of 1835 he heard Our Lord's voice addressing him from the tabernacle in these words: "Pierre, lovest thou Me?" "Lord," he answered, "I dare not say '*I love Thee*,' but I will try to love Thee!" And he wrote in his diary: "Oh, how happy I shall be when my heart, detached from everything, shall be united to God alone. I desire to make use of every means in my power to keep my heart free and to correct myself of my predominant imperfection, namely, my pride. These are the resolutions, that I have signed with my own blood before the tabernacle." This indeed he had done.

That he might not be tempted to show partiality toward any of his parishioners, he would not accept presents from them. He even threatened to have nothing more to do with those that continued to make them. They knew that he would keep his word, and so they respected the loyal pride of God's servant.

It was easily seen that God, jealous of his soul, willed that he should find all his joy in Him alone, and so He called him to the monastic life. Père Eymard shared the trials and difficulties inevitable at the beginning of every new work for God when, after repeated entreaties, he obtained from the Bishop of Grenoble permission to quit his diocese in order to enter the Society of Mary. Mgr. de Bruillard, recognizing the will of God, gave the following testimony of Père Eymard: "I am indeed showing my great esteem for the Society of Mary by permitting such a priest as you to enter it." He shared among the Marist Fathers all the trials of their early days. Oh, admirable disposition of Divine Providence! Père Eymard was later on to endure similar trials, not in-

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deed as a simple religious, but as a leader, a pilot through tempestuous waters.

The Curé of Monteynard now arranged his affairs, and quietly departed from the scene of his early labors as a priest of God. On quitting the village whom should he meet but his sister, who was returning from Grenoble.

"Where are you going?" she asked in dismay.

"I am going where the Lord calls me," was the answer. "Adieu!"

"O my dear brother," she cried with sobs and tears, "I beg of you to stay if only for one day more!"

"No, no, dear sister, that is impossible. God is calling me to-day. Allow me to be faithful to His voice. It would be too late to-morrow."

It was during the octave of the Assumption, 1839, that he was received into the Marist novitiate.

The notes of his monthly and annual Retreats, although intended for his own eyes alone, give us to understand and admire God's dealings with His servant. The grace of the Most Blessed Sacrament is there visible, and we shall find it henceforth moulding his career. Just at present he is all for Mary, he does all for Mary, but the dear Holy Virgin, knowing God's designs over His servant, leads him herself to the Most Blessed Sacrament. Till the day of his blessed death he was accustomed to say "Mary gave me to Jesus!"

The beauty and the spirit of confidence expressed in the notes which Père Eymard took before God alone are unequalled. As they were a sweet souvenir for the writer himself, so are they a precious instruction for us. Of the Retreat made on entering the novitiate,

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August 28, 1839, we read the following: "I have given myself entirely to God, even to the hour of my death, and I feel that I shall die happy if during life I entertain a great love for the Most Blessed Sacrament and for the Blessed Virgin, my Mother." Some months later he writes: "I have two subjects on which I love to dwell during prayer, Jesus in heaven and Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and the contemplation of God. My soul expands of itself before these little ideas." It was at this time that he acquired the principles of that virtue of abnegation which characterized his life. "The state in which God places me is a state of perfect submission. I have but to remain in it," he writes. And again, "The Lord ordains for me to live and to allow myself to be conducted like a child. In this way, making the sacrifice of my intelligence, I shall end by perfect submission to the divine will."

After his novitiate Père Eymard was appointed Director of the *Petit Séminaire* of Belley.

Most of his notes begin with these words: "The Lord has shown me." "The Lord has made me understand." The God of the holy tabernacle was his Teacher *par excellence*. "I have never had any other," said he. "Doubtless, I should have been too much attached to those that would have benefited me. Besides, no one ever told me what I was trying to understand." Still more, speaking of the influence that the sacred tabernacle exercised over his childhood years, he says: "Without the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, I should have been lost."

With what tender affection he spoke of the God of the Altar, of the Prisoner of His own goodness

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and love! Later, it pleased the Lord to send rude trials to His faithful servant.

"At Fourvière the Lord made me an earnest and loving reproach. "What do you fear?" He asked. 'Cast yourself into My arms.'" "Tears of sorrow and confidence have placed me through Mary in the arms of the good Jesus." "The Lord pursued me for a long time. He put me, as it were, into prison, in order to force me to contemplate Him and speak to Him. He had deprived me of everything that I might go and prostrate myself at His feet, but invariably I again attached myself to nothingness in order to shun the abyss of love in which Jesus was awaiting me. But it is over. At last, O my God, I come to cast myself at Thy feet." "My first thought, my love, absolutely everything shall be for Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament."

This affection led Père Eymard to work courageously at his own sanctification. "If God does not desire me to be a saint, He would not have created me a reasonable being." And he did sanctify himself by humiliation. "What I admire more than all is the state of humiliation and obedience which Jesus assumes in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Behold the grace of predilection for me!"

At the same time he watched with jealous care over the purity of his conscience, for "the least fault would displease the Friend of his heart." "The Lord has given me to understand the value of at once confessing one's sins after their commission. By so doing we are always in the state of grace." It was in this way that Divine Providence conducted Père Eymard during the first five years of his monastic life.

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In 1845 he was named Provincial, which office brought with it new and most important duties. To discharge them he took the resolution "to detach himself from everything in order to attach himself to God alone, and to labor courageously at banishing every thought of egoism, because," he said, "God operates in us no great thing, unless He finds in us perfect abnegation."

In this same year, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, which fell in the month of May, Our Lord granted him a very precious grace, which he imparts to us with sentiments of lively gratitude, all very significantly fore-shadowing the beginning of his Eucharistic vocation. These are his words: "I tasted intense happiness to-day while carrying the Blessed Sacrament in the parish of St. Paul, and my soul is inundated with joy. It was filled with faith and love for Jesus in the Sacred Host. Those two hours seemed to me but a moment. I ardently commended to Jesus Christ the Holy Church, France, the Society of Mary, and myself. What sighs! What tears! Oh, at that moment how I wished to possess in my own heart all hearts throughout the whole world, that I might give them to Jesus! Since the beginning of this month my attraction for the Blessed Sacrament has been more powerful than ever. It inspires me to preach Jesus alone and to bring the whole world to love Him." . . . "It is done! Henceforth that shall be the end of all my prayers, of all my desires! As patron in this new apostolate, I take St. Paul, that great soul of the Lord, and my good Mother Mary will give me the spirit of her Divine Son, will personify Him in me!"

"O my God, how happy should I be to hear from

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Thy lips those words which Thou didst once address to Saint Thomas of Aquin: 'Thou hast spoken well of Me, Pierre!' O God, Thou knowest my prayer during Thy triumph! . . . I repeat it so often! . . . Oh, how much good it has done me!"

Here we see Père Eymard in his burning love for the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Jesus in the Sacred Host—that is what binds him fast. Our Lord constituted Himself his Master without his having sought it, and he allowed himself to be encompassed by His love.

To feel one's self attracted toward something is the first condition of a vocation, for Our Lord has said: "*No man can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him.*"

It was Mary who inspired her loving child with such piety. She formed him for Jesus. During the ten years that preceded the institution of the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Jesus continued to bind him to Himself in the Eucharist by bonds that were more closely riveted day by day. He felt at the same time a great attraction for the hidden life, and for the entire resignation of his own will into the hands of God. Our Lord was preparing him for the greatest sacrifices.

"The Lord excites in me a longing for the hidden life," he wrote in September, 1845, "as if to make me shun in the various duties that I fulfil the forming of acquaintances and too close relations with people of the world. . . . My happiness would be to be able to say Holy Mass in some abandoned chapel to which no one came."

Again he writes: "As Jesus has shown me in the



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Blessed Sacrament a love of preference, I am ready to do every thing to respond to it, but the great virtue that He demands of Me is the renunciation of my own will."

On Good Friday, 1847, he humbled himself for his negligences: "O my God, it is consummated! I am dead, and my life is hidden in God with Jesus Christ on the Cross and in the Most Blessed Sacrament!"

The grace of the apostolate of the Most Blessed Sacrament began to develop. "The Lord has given me to know that, in order to apply to anything intelligibly and holily, I must first go and prostrate at His feet, and there my work will be blessed. I have then firmly resolved never to draw up any plan without having first thought it over before Our Lord and submitted it to Him for approval."

And now Our Lord strips him of everything. "What does the good God want of me? . . . The renunciation of my own will, interior poverty by which I may give myself up entirely, my understanding, my judgment, and my heart."

In 1850 he offered some New-Year gifts to Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament: "To be entirely united to Jesus shall from this moment be my *mot d'ordre* for the whole of the coming year." In the following year we have: "Perfect resignation. This is the desire of my heart. I am amazed at the love with which Jesus has ever conducted me to where I was always best off, and with which He has given me whatever was proper for me and best for my condition."

Our Lord gave manifest form to Père Eymard's longing for despoilment. He had instituted the Third

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Order of Mary, of which he was the Spiritual Director. It was his work of predilection. "God alone knows," he once said, "what this Institution cost me." In 1851 his Superior sent him to direct a flourishing educational establishment at La Seyne-sur-Mer (Var), and it was in this way that he received the appointment: "My change was announced to me at two o'clock. The good God had prepared me for it. In my prayer I had offered myself to the Blessed Sacrament, and Jesus gave me to know that I had done well. My heart is filled with the desire to serve God in the way of perfect resignation. With my whole soul I shall now devote myself to my new duties."

At this time Père Eymard thought that his end was near. His life appeared to hang on a thread, and the slightest occurrence was for his weak health an occasion of illness.

### III

#### EUCCHARISTIC VOCATION

I HAVE," he said, "a presentiment of my approaching end, and I have need of great grace to prepare for it."

Some days before his death he related to us the following: "One afternoon of January 1851, I made a visit to Notre-Dame de Fourvière. One idea constantly preoccupied me. It was this, that Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament had no Religious Society to glorify His Mystery of Love, whose only end would be entire consecration to His service. He ought to have one. . . . I promised Mary to devote myself to this object. Still it was all very vague, and I did not yet think of sacrificing my vocation as a Marist." . . . And he added in a tone filled with emotion: "Oh, what hours I spent there!"

Some one asked him: "Did you behold Our Lady, that you are so strongly impressed?"

A half-uttered affirmative,—but suppressed through humility—escaped the good priest's lips, and the questioner forbore to press the point as to whether he had really had an apparition of Our Lady, or merely an interior revelation. Whatever it may have been, from that moment he began to give himself with indefatigable courage and perseverance to the service of the Blessed Sacrament. His first idea was to institute an association of men and women, bound by spiritual ties to the *Third Order of Mary*, and consecrated to the worship of the Blessed Sacrament.

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This plan he submitted to one of his venerable Superiors. "Permit me," he said, "to lay before you an idea against which I have struggled for a long time, but which incessantly pursues me, reproaching me with resisting the voice of God."

The Rev. Père Colin understood and heartily approved the plan, which he regarded as excellent, but the execution of which he thought it more prudent to defer. At La Seyne, Père Eymard spent four years of bitter trial, constantly pursued by Our Lord. On the one side, his ardent desire for the institution of an Order of the Blessed Sacrament kept his soul in a state of unrest; and on the other, his vocation, the duties of his position, and the rules of prudence bade him resist the inspiration and hearken to the word of obedience to Superiors.

Nevertheless, during this state of uncertainty he established in the chapel of the Institute one day of Adoration every month. "In my room," he tells us, "there was a window which looked down on the tabernacle, and it was there that I passed my nights."

"One day," he added, "the Feast of Saint Joseph, we had a holiday. After sending all my students out on an excursion, I went to say Mass. When it was over, and while making my thanksgiving, I felt my soul inundated with joy." (It was in July, 1868, that Père Eymard related this fact.) "It was then that Our Lord demanded of me the sacrifice of my vocation. I assented to the demand, promising also to devote myself until death to the institution of a Society of adorers. I promised God that nothing should deter me, even should I have to endure the greatest misery

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and die in a poorhouse." These are his own forcible words energetically uttered.

He continued: "Above all, I begged God for the grace (though perhaps it was rash in me to do so) to be able to labor at this work without any human consolation. The grace which was then accorded me has strengthened me in all my trials,—and they have not been small," he added, with a smile.

In 1853 Père Eymard asked through a distinguished personage the Pope's opinion of his projected Institution. Pius IX responded that it was a beautiful idea, to which he would surely give encouragement if Our Lord desired it.

But where find the means for carrying out this project? Ah! it was a long time under ground "*rotting*," as Père Eymard expressed it in allusion to the seed sown and hidden from sight before germination.

His correspondence at this period lays before us his inmost soul, and makes it possible to follow the various emotions that agitated it during the time that preceded the foundation of the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament. We shall cull from some of them.

"Allow me to say to you," he wrote in 1853, "that I do not want to die before seeing the realization of a holy idea with which the good God has inspired me relative to His Blessed Sacrament. It is so elevated that poor nature shrinks affrighted, and so beautiful that the mere thought of it encourages me to make every sacrifice for its accomplishment."

Again he writes on the 10th of May, 1854: "Perhaps the good God wishes only my desire; but I should love to see its execution, if He so wills." A little later, when things looked more hopeful, he again wrote:

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"Pray earnestly for this work of the Blessed Sacrament. We need men, zealous and ardent priests. Beg God to send them to us."

The year 1855 began, and Père Eymard wrote in his diary the following significant words: "May this new year be a Eucharistic year! May this ungrateful earth erect a Cenacle of praise and love, and may I be the first adorer and the first victim!" Here some one objected: "But what will become of Nazareth, of Jesus and Mary?"

He answered: "From Nazareth Jesus went to the Cenacle, and Mary spent there the last days of her life." In the course of the same year he made use of these words: "The work of the Blessed Sacrament is assuming shape, it is being prepared. The plan of the Rules is drawn up. But what will the good God do with me, for I am so suffering and good for nothing any more? I am worn out. All that remains to me is to hide myself somewhere. I hope Jesus will receive me at His feet."

Père Eymard speaks here of a plan of the Rules, at which he was indeed working sedulously. He submitted them for examination to a very wise and learned friend, very capable of judging in such an affair. On the same day they reached Notre-Dame-du-Laus, as a bouquet of love to that good Mother from her devoted son. After a careful examination of his Constitutions by the friend above mentioned, Père Eymard received the following commendation: "The whole Rule is impregnated with a spirit of faith and love, which is the origin and the end of the work in hand. We may hope that the Lord will pour His blessings and favors on an Institution destined only to

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honor Him, and to cause Him to be loved in His Sacrament of Love."

But this was not enough. Sure and certain light comes from Rome. Accordingly, in the month of August, Père Eymard presented a petition to the Holy Father. In it he gave a sketch of his plan, while concealing none of the difficulties of its execution. But his words, though breathing humility and submission, were marked by vigor which sprang from the conviction that he was working for God.

"Most Holy Father," he wrote, "permit me, the least of Your sons, to come and lay at the feet of Your Holiness the inmost thought of my soul. For four years I have resisted this interior movement, fearing that it was only a mere effect of the imagination. . . . But now, Most Holy Father, I lay before You my idea. Beholding the love of Jesus in His adorable Sacrament, the abandonment in which men dare to leave Him, the little piety and the indifference of so many Christians, the ever-increasing impiety of the people of the world,—at the sight of the great and pressing needs of the Church, I have asked myself: Why are there not some men whose mission it is to adore perpetually Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar?" And he went on to speak of the several apostolates that might be accomplished by such a Society. He ended with these words: "I place my cause in the hands of Your Holiness, and I calmly await your supreme decision, which will be for me a sign of God's will. If Your Holiness judges that such an Order should not be founded, I submit, humbly convinced that God will speak by Your mouth."

Pius IX replied: "I am persuaded that this idea



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comes from God. The Holy Church has need of such an Order. Let every possible means be employed to make the Most Blessed Sacrament known." Mean-time, Père Eymard went to the waters of Mont-d'Or, to be treated for a serious chest affection.

"I arrived here yesterday," he wrote, "in this cold place. I am as I want to be all alone without a single acquaintance. With heaven above me and the tabernacle near by, I have all that I desire." Alone with Jesus, Père Eymard prepared his soul for the most bitter sacrifice of his life.

He passionately loved the Society of Mary. To break the ties of an affection seventeen years old came very hard to him. A man may give up his family. That is only a natural tie; but Jesus is the bond of souls in the monastic life. "The fraternity of Christ," says Saint Ambrose, "is closer than the fraternity of blood." The latter consists in natural resemblance; the former in identity of heart and soul. The very thought of that separation threw Père Eymard into a species of agony. "My nature is then in the Garden of Olives," he would say; and, again, speaking to an intimate friend, he added: "Know that this thought has crucified me for a long time. The filial affection that I entertain for my dear Society, for my confrères, and for my Superiors, their indulgence toward me, and toward my spiritual and corporal weakness—all combine to make me remain quietly where I am. On the other side, I must respond to the grace of God, since He designs to call me to labor and to die for this beautiful work to which I feel myself irresistibly drawn."

By the following words we may measure the bitter-

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ness of his sacrifice: "God has willed that I make to Him the sacrifice of the *Society*, for on first entering into religion I had to sacrifice only a father and one sister."

The Society of Mary alone was his mother, and in his heart he remained always its child. He said: "I shall always be the child of the Society in love and gratitude. One can not forget so good a mother!" The year 1856 was to behold the end of his terrible mental sufferings. The struggle had at length become so violent that he could not longer endure it. In spite of the inspiration from God to devote himself to religious obedience and to submit to the advice of Superiors, he was still struggling against himself. "What ought I to do?" he asks in one of his meditations on the Blessed Sacrament. "Abandon myself entirely to God, act as if I had no plan, consider myself unworthy of being chosen by God, and in my prayers forget self."

He went still further, and feared himself the victim of delusion. "I am deceived," he said. "The serpent has deceived me, *serpens decepit*. Lord, send him whom Thou hast chosen. I am not worthy." This was the moment for which Almighty God was waiting. He changed the decision of Père Eymard's Superior, who now ordered him to Paris, there to make a Retreat under the direction of a worthy ecclesiastic. And so he started for Paris, and on May 1st took up his stay with a Community of priests of whom he knew nothing, not even their name. On that same day he wrote: "I know neither the name nor the object of this Congregation. It appears to me to be a Trappist convent. But there is a tabernacle, and

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that is enough for me." He tells us himself of the state of his soul and the object he had in view in making the Retreat:

"I want to come to some definite decision about an idea which has preoccupied me for several years, giving me great anxiety and mental suffering. As it is not only an attraction of the heart, but something that touches my conscience as well, I want to be enlightened by consulting a stranger. I am resolved to submit to his decision, whatever it may be. I shall pray and regain my peace of soul before consulting any one. I shall put aside all my own ideas and desires, all that might otherwise influence a decision in accordance with my plans. If God, in His infinite goodness, says to me, 'Go on, mount this flaming Calvary,' by His grace and my own ardent desire to love Him, I shall be ready to make the sacrifice. If, on the contrary, on account of my unworthiness, the good God commands me to return to Lyons, I shall do so at once with no other regret than that of not being found sufficiently holy to serve more perfectly and more directly the great King of Love, our good Jesus."

The trial lasted till the 13th of May, and it appeared as if it were likely to become the tomb of his hopes. But Our Lord soon brought about their resurrection. He did not allow His servant to remain there forever.

Let us hear Père Eymard himself recounting that unexpected resurrection: "After twelve days of prayer, tears, and complete abandonment of self, the trial is over.

"Three Bishops were judges of the question: the Bishop of Tripoli, and the Bishop of Carcassone, Mgr. de la Bouillèrie, were to examine it from a religious

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and personal point of view; and Mgr., the Archbishop of Paris, was to give the final decision." Père Eymard exposed his reasons humbly and sincerely. . . . Everything appeared to be opposed to this desire of his heart, and he had already made the sacrifice of it . . . when, to his intense surprise, he heard from the lips of the three venerable prelates these thrice-blessed words:

"The will of God for the foundation of the Society of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar has been most clearly revealed. Our Lord has Himself solved the difficulty. Henceforth unhesitatingly give yourself to this work alone." Mgr. de Sibour, of happy memory, cordially blessed the first two members, and said to them: "From this day you shall be my children."

This was the hour chosen by God. Père Eymard and his companion left the archiepiscopal palace filled with joy and gratitude, and hurried to Saint Sulpice. There, by the hands of the Blessed Virgin, Queen of the Cenacle, they consecrated themselves wholly to the service of Jesus in His Sacrament of Love.

## IV

### FOUNDATION AND SPIRIT OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

**"D**UC IN ALTUM! Launch out into the deep!" Our Lord Himself had pronounced these words by the lips of authority. And so Père Eymard went on in the strength of God, deterred by no obstacle. And sacrifices? He felt himself powerfully attracted to them, he hungered for them. "Were I a saint, I should ask God to annihilate me entirely, that His glory alone should shine forth, His grace alone be magnified."

Self-annihilation—henceforth this will be the end of his prayers and uninterrupted efforts.

If we would follow him up to understand his life and teaching, this is the clue that will guide us. It was under the influence of his own nothingness that he acted while establishing the mighty kingdom of Jesus Christ, for he said: "Nothingness is everything." Divine Providence took care of His children, who were but two in number, Peter and John, and the Cenacle was established. The Archbishop, in his benevolent thoughtfulness for their welfare, made over to them a fine property, occupied until then by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart whose school had not succeeded. This place, the scene of trial for its former occupants, now became that of Père Eymard's early success.

The first thing to do was to enlarge the little sanctuary, an undertaking that lasted the rest of that

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year. Then they transformed a hall into a chapel, and raised a wooden altar covered with white muslin. Jesus saw that little white tabernacle, almost as poor as His Crib of Bethlehem, and hastened to take possession of it, June 1, 1856.

On that same day, at the Church of Saint Thomas of Aquin, Mgr. Sibour announced to the members of the Nocturnal Adoration Society the work that had just begun for the glory of the Most Blessed Sacrament. "The news was received with great joy," as we are told. The illustrious Père Felix, the preacher of the Conferences at Notre Dame, with his usual eloquence and authority, embodied the principles of the new Society in these few words: "To save society, the spirit of sacrifice must be revived, and this can be done only by drawing it from its source, the Most Blessed Sacrament."

When the Bishop of Tripoli announced the same news, that a Society of men especially and entirely consecrated to the Blessed Sacrament had been instituted, Catholic hearts were filled with confidence and joy.

In the beginning of January, 1857, Père Eymard was able to expose the Blessed Sacrament and fulfil the principal duties of his new vocation.

On the Feast of the Epiphany, sometimes called the Three Kings, the day on which the Magi Kings laid their crowns at the feet of the Master of the universe, the Lord mounted His Eucharistic Throne. Most of the great religious families were represented on this joyous solemnity, each desirous to greet affectionately the birth of their young sister. The members of the Nocturnal Adoration were also present in large num-

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bers. Père Eymard delivered the sermon. He began with these words:

"One day Saint John the Baptist received a deputation from the High Priests of the Jews, who said to him: '*Tu qui es?* Who art thou?' It seems to me, gentlemen, that your presence here to-day proposes to me the same question. 'Who are you? What is this new Work?'

"To the first I answer, '*Nothing.*' And may we ever be *nothing* in the hands of God! We have nothing that contributes to the glory, the success, the power of a Work. Were we great by birth, or by the protection of the high-born and influential, we should fear that God was not with us." . . . "We began with the benediction of Holy Church. . . ." "But what is this new Work? It is the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The title of our Religious is Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament. The end of our Institute is to render glory and honor to Jesus by the perpetual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and to discharge all other ministrations in connection with its noble end."

From that day the Blessed Sacrament was exposed three times a week. Vocations were rare. Many tried, but few persevered. Père Eymard accepted this new trial with his usual faith. "We are not capable of giving vocations," he used to say, "but the seed is sown. We have only to let it rot in the earth that it may germinate in God's good time."

Another trial overtook the work hardly begun. They had to leave their little Bethlehem so dear to them, and for over a year search through Paris for some place suitable for their new project, but none could



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be found. Very often they thought they had at last what they wanted, but their hope proved vain.

One day a chapel admirably adapted to their purpose was offered them, but with no house near by for the Fathers. "How consoling!" exclaimed the Founder, "we shall begin by lodging our dear Lord, the King, before His servants are housed. That is just as it should be. But He is so good, He will find us a dwelling later." This scheme however fell through like so many before it.

Père Eymard had other subjects also to distress his heart, and his anxiety at times amounted to agony. We may judge of this by the suppliant cries that he sent up to Our Lord at such moments: "*Bone Jesu, salva nos, perimus! Hoc solum habemus residui ut oculos nostros dirigamus ad te!*—O good Jesus, save us, we perish! This alone remains to us that we lift up our eyes to Thee!"

"*O bone Magister, ubi, quando, quomodo tu volueris!*—O good Master, where, when, how Thou dost will!"

"*Loquere, Domine, et ne derelinquas nos!*—Speak, Lord, do not forsake us!"

"*Domine, vim patior, responde pro me!*—Lord, I suffer violence. Answer for me!"

"*Domine Jesu, tristis est anima mea usque ad desolationem et fletum!*—Lord Jesus, my soul is sad even to desolation and tears!"

"*Da mihi victoriam, O Rex crucifixus amore! Vincam charitate!*—Grant me victory, O King crucified by love! May I conquer by charity!"

"*Salva nos, Domine Jesu, vince, regna, impera solus!*—Save us, O Lord Jesus! Conquer, reign, command alone!"

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And again: "O Lord Jesus, make me hope against hope!" "Lord, I give myself entirely to Thee. Thou wilt do all, for all human support fails me, and I am in the most profound darkness!"

These trials increased his strength of soul. He was willing to drain the chalice of bitterness to the very dregs that the holy will of God might triumph. "*Fiat voluntas tua!* For Thy love I will courageously drink this chalice of suffering!" Jesus was with him, he would never let Him go, and with Jesus hell is a paradise. "*Mane nobiscum, Domine, et sufficit nobis! et humiliatio et solitudo erunt paradisus voluptatis*—Remain with us, O Lord, and it is enough! Humiliation and solitude will be a paradise of delight." His love triumphing, Our Lord at last pointed out to him the tabernacle of His choice.

It was the little chapel of the faubourg Saint Jacques. At the last moment however, when the negotiations were about to be concluded, the demon employed every device to stop them. He often appeared to be on the point of succeeding. But Père Eymard gained the victory by appealing to Almighty God to defend His own cause. He wrote: "All appears to be lost! Is the demon going to triumph because of our mistakes and inexperience? Thy glory, O Lord, is at stake. Exalt Thyself in our nothingness!" He had struck the right note in this prayer, for it is an infallible means to triumph over the Heart of Jesus.

On Easter Sunday, 1858, the Divine Master appeared upon His new Throne of Love, and there He remained for nine years, dispensing His graces so abundantly that Père Eymard called this sanctuary "The Chapel of Miracles."

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When troublous times drove Our Lord and His faithful servants from this favored abode the holy Founder sometimes returned to pray in its blessed precincts. At the sight of its broken windows and crumbling walls he fell on his knees, saying with tears in his eyes: "Let us unite with the angels in weeping over this heap of ruins!"

To the first blessings poured out upon the little Institute the Eucharistic King deigned to add many more, and the Houses of Marseilles, Angers, Brussels, and Saint Maurice quickly followed. In December the Venerable Founder laid at the feet of His Holiness the first fruits of the words of encouragement he had deigned to address to him three years before. He also presented to the Holy Father the appreciative letters that he had received from several of the French Bishops.

Pius IX again blessed the Work and its Founder, granted it precious Indulgences and with his own hand signed a Laudatory Brief:

"Beloved Son,

"We have learned with the greatest satisfaction of the zeal with which for the last three years you have maintained and propagated the adoration and worship of the Blessed Sacrament. The letters from the venerable Bishops of France bear striking testimony to this. May Our Lord in His mercy fructify the labors undertaken in this work, which is unanimously praised! And may this Apostolic Benediction, which We give you from the fulness of Our paternal heart be the pledge of a good so ardently desired."

Pius IX's words bore their fruit. The little Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament was asked for and re-

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ceived the following year with the most touching kindness by Monseigneur de Mazenod, of holy memory, then Bishop of Marseilles. The Faithful of that Catholic city flocked around the new Eucharistic foundation with devotion and pious enthusiasm which have never grown cold, but which go on increasing from day to day.

In 1862 Père Eymard found that he had sufficient members to authorize his inaugurating the exercises of a regular novitiate. Here we should like to give a sketch of his spirit, his manners, and his instructions, but the limits of this little Life oblige us to brevity. We shall, however, present the reader with a few extracts embodying their idea.

Père Eymard's only aim in instituting the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament was to honor the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

God, annihilated as He is in the Sacrament of His Love, has as King of heaven and earth, a right to a solemn and perpetual worship which, according to the feeble conception of this world, should correspond to the glory of heaven, but which He willed to sacrifice in order to dwell among men. But Christians can not neglect the duties of their state in life without disarranging the good order of society. Père Eymard's idea was to gather together some men of good will and free from worldly cares, who would form the earthly court of the Heavenly King. Then the Lord would come forth from His tabernacle to manifest Himself and to reign. He would be the Master, and He would have servants destined for His service alone, for the service of His Divine Person. They

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would leave every other duty for attendance around His throne and the needs of His Royal Presence.

And these Religious should serve Him directly by their personal attention, and not indirectly by their labor. Others attracted to martyrdom, cross the seas, bearing light and life to the nations plunged in the darkness of death; others again spend their life in the education of Christian generations; still others, by the preaching of the word, combat the world's false systems and teaching along with its miserable prejudices. The Religious-Adorer however, honors the Presence of the King. He is His courtier. And while the valiant soldiers of the Cross are battling for the glory of Jesus Christ, all that he has to do is to see that the Master is never left alone.

This was the dominant idea as written by Père Eymard at the head of his Rules: "Let all our Religious understand clearly that they are chosen and have made but one promise, and that is to consecrate themselves to the service of the Divine Person of Jesus Christ, our King and our God, really present in His Sacrament of Love. Behold the reason for which, as the good and faithful servants of so great a King, they consecrate entirely, without any personal interest—*absque sui proprio*—all their talents and virtues, their studies and labors to His greater glory."

This service naturally comprehends several charges. A king must have a palace and courtiers. Priests and laics find in the service of the Lord functions both noble and royal, since the King Himself is the object of them, and thus a wide field is opened for courageous activity and duties adapted to every capacity.

All without distinction shall lead the common life,

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like the members of one family, animated by the Spirit of Divine Love which unites them in one same Society, namely, the public worship, the adoration of Jesus in His Sacrament.

We shall see later on the principal virtue of this service. Let us now learn from Père Eymard himself what is prescribed for it and how that adoration is made.

“The Lord has different classes of servants. Some labor afar for His glory, while others He desires to be attached to His adorable service alone.” Speaking to his Religious, he says: “He has invited you to follow Him, but it is He alone that you must seek, and it is also from Him alone that you must expect everything. This absolute service is the stipulation of your enterprise. The law of your life, the perfection of your holiness is servitude. You are not come here to sanctify yourselves in solitude, nor to become apostles, nor to perfect souls by wise direction; you are come to serve the Lord. Just as He attaches His apostles to His mission, He has bound you to His Person. Your duty is to be constantly before Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar. If ever the Blessed Sacrament ceased to exist, we too should no longer have any motive to exist. It is by Adoration that the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament responds to God’s designs over it. Adoration! Nothing can take its place, and everything else must give way to this, our first duty.”

“In order to be wholly attached to the service of their Heavenly King and always prepared to fulfil the end of their vocation of adorers, our Religious will preserve their independence, their liberty, by not engaging in any other service.”



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"They shall, but for no very long time, be employed in preaching, or in the direction of souls, for that might diminish their ardor for Adoration." This principal point can not be better explained than by the following words of Père Eymard : "When you came to knock at the door of this holy asylum," he used to say to his novices, "you were not asked what dispositions or what degree of virtue you possessed, or whether you had performed few or many good works. No. They simply asked: 'Who sent you?' 'Jesus Christ.' 'To whom do you come?' 'To Jesus Christ.' 'Have you any conditions to make?' 'None.' 'In that case, enter at once.' "

"You have been called to Adoration. Will you kneel at this prie-Dieu and there be consumed like the candle before you? Will you be the servant of the Lord? 'Yes.' 'Come, then! "

"You were told not to pay attention to your Superiors, but to go straight to God by yourself. He alone is the master, your Superior and Director. We however esteem ourselves happy to be His substitutes and, like Saint John the Baptist, charged to say to you: 'There He is!' *We* withdraw after we have led you to *Him*."

"Serve Him and be content with your lot. As long as He will be satisfied with you, He will take care of you, and no one will find fault with you."

Religious perform a courtier's service before the Lord three times a day. They run over consecutively all the hours of the dial in order to share in the joy of the morning, in the sweet obscurity of the evening, and the religious gravity of the night.

"Consider the hour of Adoration that falls to you

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an hour in Paradise," said the Venerable Founder, with inimitable grace. "Go there as to heaven, as to the Banquet of God. Say to yourselves: 'In four, three, two hours, I shall have an audience of love and grace with the Lord. He has invited me, He is expecting me.' If you should be marked for an inconvenient hour, rejoice the more. That is for you a privileged hour, it counts double. Should it happen that on account of sickness, you are prevented from making your hour of Adoration, regret it for a moment, and then unite with him who is substituting for you."

At the first stroke of the hour that called Père Eymard to his service of Adoration he was seen to quit everything, to kneel at his *prie-Dieu* in reverent composure, upright, scarcely touching the resting-place for the hands, his eyes fixed most respectfully on the Sacred Host, and his faith piercing heaven. His Adoration alone was a lesson to his sons.

"Do you wish to be great in love before the Lord? Speak of love toward Himself. Speak to Jesus of His Divine Father, of the work that He undertook for that Father's glory, and you will rejoice His Heart.

"Speak to Him of His love for men, and you will fill Him with joy. Speak to Him of His holy Mother, and you will honor His filial affection. Speak to Him of His saints, and you will increase in them His graces.

"If you speak to Jesus about Himself, He in His turn will speak about you. Your heart will expand under the rays of the Sun of goodness as does the moist dew-kissed flower in the early morn of springtime. His sweet voice will pierce your soul. Then you will

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hearken to Him in silence and peace, or rather in the sweet working of love. *You will live in Him!*

“What most checks the flow of His grace in us is that scarcely have we come to the feet of the Divine Master when we at once begin to display our sins and miseries, that is, we tire our mind and sadden our heart with the thought of them. Now, to escape from this state we must suffer. Let your first aspiration be then, ‘O my loving Jesus, how happy I am to come to Thee and to be able to spend this hour in Thy divine Presence! How good Thou art to have willed to call me, to deign to love a poor creature like me! Oh, I will, as far as I am able, love Thee with reciprocal love!’ Then love opens the Heart of Jesus to you. Enter therein, love and adore.

“But what should be the subject of that Adoration which comes around so often? *Assueta vilescunt*. Routine deadens. Would you know the secret of meditating on the Blessed Sacrament? Look through the prism of this divine Mystery at all the truths, all the virtues of religion.”

Speaking more in detail, he said: “What more simple than to find a likeness between Jesus’ birth in the stable of Bethlehem and His sacramental birth on the altar and in our heart? Who does not understand that the hidden life at Nazareth is continued in the Sacred Host of the tabernacle, and that the Passion which the Man-God endured on Calvary is daily renewed at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Is not the Lord meek and humble of Heart in the Blessed Sacrament as He was during His mortal life? Is He not always the Good Shepherd, the Divine Consoler, the Friend of all hearts? Happy the soul that knows

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how to find Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and in the Blessed Sacrament all things!"

To honor and, so to speak, to revive all the mysteries of time and eternity in Our Lord Jesus Christ, who continues their graces and applies their merits in the Blessed Sacrament, is the inexhaustible mine of the adorer. And Père Eymard, in order to work that mine easily and to draw from its superabundant riches, provided an instrument the most simple and most readily managed even by the most inexperienced in the practice of prayer. There is actually for the soul that meditates at Jesus' feet a special grace of place, which comes from the Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. There He is Priest in full possession of the eternal Priesthood; and there, by the Passion which He endured, by the state of humiliation which He deigns to accept, and by the ardent desires of His Heart, He continues that fervent prayer which during His mortal life was always heard. M. Olier says, with still more force: "Personally *one*, He is morally *universal*," that is, He gathers into Himself, He receives into His own Heart the homage and the desire of all Christians, His members, and our prayers have no merit if we do not unite them with those of Jesus Christ.

Now, the prayer *par excellence* of Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in which He presents to His Eternal Father an infinite homage of adoration, a victim of propitiation, a host of thanksgiving, and a prayer by which He obtains all that He asks.

The four ends of the Mass are: adoration, thanksgiving, propitiation, and petition. Every Christian

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who unites in these four ends perfectly performs the prayer of adoration. To explain this manner of adoration, to recommend it to all, was the constant aim of Père Eymard.

"The best manner of adoring," he used to say, "is that which the Holy Spirit inspires to a pure and humble soul." He gave it as a sure guide, he proposed it as a powerful means for making the hours of adoration more advantageous, above all when the Lord, having allowed the source of His sweetnesses to dry up for some time, renders prayer difficult to the soul.

It is again, a suitable means for easily uniting the most diverse objects, for there is no mystery which meditated at the feet of Jesus, does not afford matter for adoration, for reparation, for craving pardon, for thanksgiving, and for petition for one's self and the neighbor. There is likewise no virtue which we can not adore in the Lord, for which we can not thank Him and find in Him its exemplar; then casting a glance on self, who would not feel ashamed of resembling the Master so little, who would not fervently utter this prayer: "O Jesus, plant and increase in me Thy virtues!"

The foregoing is an abridgment of the manner of Adoration according to the four ends of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

"A whole hour passed in this way appears but a single moment," says Père Eymard, "and, astonished at having so soon to quit the *prie-Dieu*, we think of the happy moment when we shall return, and that will be soon."

To his hours of Adoration the Religious adds his Divine Office, a public adoration still more solemn, during

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which the King is surrounded by His whole court chanting His glory in the words of the Holy Spirit.

Besides this immediate service near his Master, there is still another royal service in which, if a laic, he busies himself with the worship of the King and the care of His house; or if a priest, he seeks for means to extend in souls the kingdom of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

At every hour of the day a bell warns him, no matter where he may be, to fall on his knees and salute the Most Blessed Sacrament. The bell reminds him of the near Presence of the King. And to keep alive his fervor and devotion, he adds an affectionate testimony of honor to the Queen of the Cenacle: "And blessed be the holy and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God! *Laudes ac gratiæ sint omni momento Sanctissimo ac Divinissimo Sacramento! Et benedicta sit sancta, immaculata et purissima Conceptio Beatæ Virginis Mariæ, Matris Dei!*"

Père Eymard aimed at making his Religious true servants of the Blessed Sacrament, living for the honor of the Holy Eucharist, devoting to Jesus Christ their time and their purpose, offering to the King of Kings the homage ordinarily rendered even to the least of the kings of this earth.

The end of this service, the characteristic sign of these servants adorned the arms of the Divine Master, namely, forgetfulness of self, abnegation, and annihilation. "The characteristic virtue of an adorer, that which determines the foundation, the form, and the obligation of his religious sanctity, ought to be a Eucharistic virtue, elevated and constant. Jesus Christ ought to be ever and in all things the present model and the real end."

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“Now let us recall that He has annihilated Himself, taking the form of ordinary bread.

“Jesus hides His divine and His human glory in the Most Blessed Sacrament. He binds therein both His divine and His human power, He sacrifices His own will, He hides His virtues, His goodness, meekness, and love. *Vere Deus absconditus*—the God truly hidden. Behold the model of the Religious adorer! This virtue sanctifies his whole soul, his whole life, all his senses. It corresponds to the sacramental state of Our Lord. By it the Religious gives himself up to Jesus Christ to dispose as He will of his person and his life. He becomes, so to say, His body, His members, His external powers. He proves his love, for love expends itself. Herein lie all the glory, all the holiness that Our Lord expects from us and by us. To annihilate self that He may be exalted, to make self disappear that He may appear, to be like the sacramental species, which certainly are not proud since they have no existence, this is the aim of the adorer. In other words, it is to live in absolute dependence on Our Lord by allowing Him liberty of action in everything.

“The practical rule of our conduct is: ‘What does Jesus Christ desire at this moment? Is there in this idea, this work, this desire, something that tends to His glory?’ For things not of obligation the Venerable Founder gave this rule: ‘What would Our Lord do under such circumstances?’ ”

Again he tells us: “During His mortal life Our Lord did nothing by His own will. He said Himself: ‘*I do nothing of myself*’ (John viii, 28). His doctrine is not His own, but that of His Father. They



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wanted to make Him king, but He refused all honor. He did not even want to be called *good*, for He said: *None is good but God alone* (Luke xviii, 19).

"These essential words of our Constitution, *absque sui proprio*, afford us the means of participating as much as is possible to weak creatures in Jesus Christ's sacrifice of His personality. This leading idea in its simplest signification, may be reduced to this: Jesus Christ annihilates Himself in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, but He does so that we may make Him live again and reign in us. Then, let us receive Him into our soul, and as there can be in it only one principle of life, only one will, let us yield up to Him the inspiration, the direction of our life. We live and we act, but Jesus is the initiator of our life and our actions. It is then only natural that to Him should return the glory.

"There is nothing new in this idea. It is not we who have originated it. It is the *vivo, jam non ego* of Saint Paul. The saints realized it in their daily life. We wish simply to make of it the ordinary virtue of a Religious Society."

This rule was one of those to which the Venerable Founder had the habit of frequently reverting. "To serve," he used to say, "not only by one's labor, but by one's self, costs. And yet we must reach the point of being all for Jesus, of doing all things by Him and for Him. That is going far, it is giving the tree as well as its fruits, it is accepting every sacrifice, both spiritual and corporal. Ah!" he used to say, with deep emotion, "remember that you have given yourselves entirely to Jesus, and that for Him you have abandoned everything. Take nothing back from the

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Master, neither of your soul nor of your body. Give Him your understanding. Let all your studies be for Him. You should have but one single knowledge, the knowledge of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Do all your thoughts turn to It? Your whole heart should belong to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Love nothing outside of your service, nothing that is opposed to it. Furthermore you have no longer any right to esteem, to love. And should some one attach himself to you, were it even for good, even to draw nearer to Jesus, he is deceiving himself. Beware lest they recall your personality, for you have renounced it! Your body also should belong to your Master, and whenever you possess more than Jesus Christ, you are failing in your promise. It ought to suffice the servant to be like his Master."

Père Eymard carried this renunciation to its extreme consequences. Jesus Christ give us all. He has then a right to demand all from us. To offer Him one's time, one's thoughts and actions, one's life and natural qualities, is something, but yet not all. We must leave to Him the free disposal of our supernatural merits, we must absolutely forget self, and in laboring think not of the eternal reward. Our principal end should be neither natural nor supernatural. We must think only of the Master for whom we are laboring, turn our eyes upon Him without permitting them to rest on any one or anything else.

"You have not been admitted into the Society of the Blessed Sacrament," he used to say to his novices, "to become good and virtuous men, nor have you entered to lay up for yourselves greater merit and gain a higher degree of glory in heaven. No, for in

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that case it would be proposing self as the chief end of your service. You have come simply to offer yourself to the service of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar, and to give Him the greatest glory possible by your homage of love, which rises even to the heroism of offering it as the most simple and natural expression of the accomplishment of duty. Your virtue will then consist in giving yourselves, in spending yourselves continually and, after doing all in your power, even accomplishing heroic acts of virtue, you will think that you have done your duty only. Then you will be able to appear with confidence in the presence of your King.

“All honor, all merit, must redound to Jesus, your Master. The soldier gains the victory and dies. The king conquers, and he alone receives the glory.” Then to assure the faint-hearted, he used to add, smiling: “The time will come when we shall be well rewarded. If we forget ourselves for Our Lord, He will not forget us. While waiting for this, let us have no other solicitude than that of serving Him and unremittingly sacrificing self.”

## V

### PÈRE EYMARD'S LOVE FOR MARY, OUR LADY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

“**A**FTER all, these things continually take place in ordinary life. Does the mother demand of her child the recompense of her continual sacrifices? the bridegroom of his bride? the friend of his friend? Let us then have not less love for Our Lord. Oh, may He be able to say of us: *‘They love Me for Myself alone!’*”

Our readers will pardon our lengthy quotations, but since the Society of the Blessed Sacrament stands as Père Eymard's principal life-work, we have thought nothing could be more proper than to allow him to speak whom Our Lord chose to found it.

The apostolate of the Most Blessed Sacrament (for the Venerable Père Eymard was indeed an apostle), will show him to us forming the Court of Jesus Christ of voluntary servitors who looked upon the love and service of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar as their chief duty. They had to serve and to fight. The first mission of the Eucharistic army is to surround Jesus Christ and do Him homage as His Guard of Honor. They also expose Him on His throne in order to lead numerous adorers to His feet.

The Blessed Sacrament! Behold the fire that Jesus came to bring to earth, and His ardent desire is to see it inflaming the whole world.

Père Eymard comprehended that burning desire of the Divine Heart of Jesus, and so he preached only Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

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He wrote to the Abbé Brameret, of the *Grand Séminaire* of Bourg: "*Love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the Holy of Holies of the Father, His Tabernacle, His Legacy, His Field, His Glory. With the Eucharist we have everything, heaven and the hearts of our brethren.*"

Again viewing the Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament from a social standpoint, not only for individuals, but also for the masses, he wrote: "We do not hesitate to say that the worship of Exposition is the need of our times. That public and solemn profession of faith on the part of the people in the Divinity of Jesus Christ and in the reality of His Sacramental Presence is necessary. It is the best refutation to offer in opposition to renegades and apostates, to the indifferent and impious. It is needed for the salvation of society. Society is dying because it no longer possesses a centre of truth and charity, no longer the family life. Men isolate themselves, they live a self-centred life, they aim at sufficing for self. Dissolution is imminent. But society will live again full of vigor when all its members shall be united around our Emmanuel. Minds will again harmonize under the influence of one common truth, the bonds of true and strong friendship will be renewed under the action of one same love.

We must go up to the Source of life, to Jesus in the Eucharist. We must bring Him forth from His retreat to place Him once more at the head of Christian society, which He will direct and save. We must build Him a palace, raise for Him a royal throne, form for Him a court of faithful servitors, a family of friends, a people of adorers.

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"The Eucharist is not only the life of the Christian. It is that of the nations. Man, who lives in social intercourse, has need of a bond that will unite him to his fellows, of a law of honor, of a centre of affection. The Eucharist is the bond of the Christian. By It we are shielded, we eat at the same table, we have the same Father who is in heaven. Ah! we know well that an age flourishes or degenerates in accordance with its worship of the Divine Eucharist. It is the life and the measure of its faith, charity, and virtue.

"The worship of the Eucharist expresses the influence of a generation, the holiness of an age. When it dominates the faith and piety of a nation, that nation increases and prospers. The worship of the Eucharist is like the sun on fine days, warming, enlivening, fructifying nature, making it everywhere produce and ripen its fruits. But when the Divine Sacrament is neglected, or where It is, as among the schismatic Greeks, only the Viaticum for the dying, shut up in a corner of a sacristy, it is then the dim winter sun which, shining for only a few hours, leaves the earth cold and frozen. . . . Let us bask in the rays of the Eucharistic Sun, and all things will be renewed."

"There is no question here of defending a truth of Faith," he says, "but of defending the King of truth everywhere attacked." This is not the time to proclaim this or that Gospel virtue. We must serve the Lord abandoned in His Sacrament of Love, we must preach the Blessed Sacrament in season and out of season, everywhere and at all times. Our Lord must have His share in all our intercourse with men, in all our business with the world: *'Dum omni modo*

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*Christus annuntietur*—So that by all means, Christ be preached" (*Philip*. I, 18).

But may we not fear meeting minds weak and incapable of following a regular course of ideas?

"Every flower has always the shape, color, and perfume peculiar to it. And yet do we ever grow tired of admiring it, of inhaling its fragrance? In heaven there is always the same glory, the same canticle of love, which rejoices the City of God. Let the apostle-adorer then, constantly preach Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, that grand Mystery of Faith, which contains in Itself all that is great and beautiful."

In the first years of his apostolate, Père Eymard had studied to their very depths the dogmatic teachings of the Blessed Sacrament, a course that would not have been of so great advantage to him, had he not made other studies much more necessary, and which he also pursued under the inspiration of God. One can not study out of books love and devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament. The Lord Himself must teach it to the pure and simple soul.

It was in Adoration that Père Eymard acquired that knowledge of the Blessed Sacrament which enabled him constantly to speak of the Eucharist without repeating what he had already said.

"Study the Blessed Sacrament," he used to say to his Religious. "Know well your own trade, and let your hours of Adoration bear abundant fruits."

And he added: "If any one understands the Blessed Sacrament better than we, let us give up to him our *prie-Dieu*, for we should not be worthy to kneel at it!"

He never mounted the pulpit without having spent



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considerable time before the Blessed Sacrament. It was his custom to write down some notes and to penetrate his soul with all that referred to them in the Gospel of Saint John, which he always carried on his heart. He called this "kneading the flour," which when exposed to the Eucharistic fire, became "solid bread" fit to give to his hearers. Frequently, as he tells himself, light was vouchsafed him only at the last moment, and he changed the subject already prepared for that which the Lord had inspired.

This supernatural light was remarked even by his hearers, especially during his last years. "I am convinced," remarked a celebrated preacher after listening to one of Père Eymard's sermons, "that he speaks under a direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit."

To unite example to precept, for he used to beg his Religious to let their instructions be "Adorations made aloud," he did so himself, abandoning himself completely to the interior transport of grace. But on leaving the pulpit, he could recall nothing of what he had said.

When on a certain occasion, he was congratulated by several persons who had been charmed by his sermons, he said to an intimate friend that he did not know what they meant, since in his instructions he looked upon himself as nothing. On another occasion, an extract of a sermon which he had delivered the evening before, fell into his hands. "Who," he asked with charming simplicity, "has said these beautiful things?" When told that they were from his own sermon of the day before, he replied quietly: "I never should have thought it!"

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The remembrance of his noble simplicity long lived in the mind of many, who were astonished at it.

"Why," said a priest of Paris to him one day, "are you not more careful about the form of your sermons, since they are so rich in ideas?"

But that would have been contrary to Père Eymard's fixed resolution. From the very first, he had begged Our Lord not to allow his words to attract the attention of his hearers to himself. The ideal to which he aspired was that, after hearing him preach, people would say: "What good, clear water flows to us through that worm-eaten pipe!" No matter what the diversity of rank and intelligence among his audience, no matter how multiplied the subjects of his sermons, Père Eymard could always introduce the Blessed Sacrament. The Mystery was for him not only a point of Christian doctrine, but the entire doctrine, and he had the admirable facility of referring to It the whole circle of divine worship. When giving Retreats at Rouen, Nantes, Rennes, Gand, and Brussels, he spoke above all, of the glory of the Blessed Sacrament and the fruit the Christian ought to draw from Holy Communion.

To the Benedictines of Pierre-qui-Vire, who have restored a penitential system, which our age can not conceive possible, Père Eymard gave Our Lord as the Model for their austere life. "Your state is a living death, as is that of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, *tanquam cadaver!*"

For the newly ordained on the point of entering upon duties bristling with all kinds of difficulties, Père Eymard developed in a Retreat of eight days these three fundamental ideas: "A priest ought to be a

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saint. It is Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament who can make him such. To imitate the life of Jesus Christ is sanctity. Principles are imbibed with the mother's milk. Holy Communion inoculates us with the spirit, the virtues, the habits of Jesus Christ."

The priest is the servitor of truth. Love is enkindled in Holy Communion, the furnace of heat and light. "It was only after the Last Supper that Jesus could say to His Apostles: 'All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you.' It was only then that the Apostles began to comprehend Our Lord a little."

In fine, the priest is a man of sacrifice and devotedness. But is not the Blessed Sacrament the sacrifice *par excellence*? the highest degree of devotedness? "Let a priest place himself under this love-press, and he will cry out with Saint Paul: *Charitas urget nos!* From the altar to devotedness there is but one step."

In 1862, Père Eymard was asked to preach the Novena preparatory to the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Every evening for nine days, he explained to the Faithful who thronged around his pulpit the close relation between the Blessed Sacrament and the adorable Heart of Jesus.

It was then that he gave utterance to this sublime assertion: "Who is Jesus Christ? He is the incarnation of God's love for man, the God made Man, personally present in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar."

Then he showed the Heart of Jesus preparing in accordance with Its ardent desire, that sublime Sacrament, instituting It during the Last Supper in Its ex-

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cess of love, and perpetuating It through Its love for men, despite their indifference and ingratitude.

It would be impossible for us to touch upon all Venerable Eymard's sermons. For twelve years he continued them with zeal sustained by his ardent love, and with incalculable profit to all who were so happy as to hear them.

Let us briefly sum up this career so nobly fulfilled in a word taken from his own notes and which gives us an insight into the beginning and the end of his Eucharistic apostolate: "Jesus Christ is there! . . . Then, all for Him!"

### OUR LADY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

Should not Mary associated as she is in all the mysteries of Jesus,—Mary, the loving apostle of every devotion, the devoted directress, the gentle and most amiable model of the virtues of Jesus—should not Mary have her place in the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament?—And which is her place? When we perform our duty to the God of the Eucharist, what help shall we look for from Mary to aid us more speedily to find her Son hidden under the Eucharistic veils? In a word, is it here alone that Mary will fail to be our apostle, our model, our mother?

The need of her maternal protection is most sensibly felt. By virtue of His real and living Presence in the Sacrament, Jesus demands duties better fulfilled, virtues more elevated. It is more difficult to discover Him behind His veil of love. "O then, Mary, be our model! We so much desire to appear before our Eucharistic Jesus, but only in thy company. We shall

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be satisfied to know that thou thyself hast discharged toward the Blessed Sacrament the duties that our title of Christian imposes on us. And when we receive Jesus, when we adore Him hidden in the tabernacle or exposed on His radiant throne, we shall be so happy to thank thee with Him, and to know that if Jesus gives Himself it is through thee, that if we possess the Holy Eucharist, it is to thee we owe it, and that all Eucharistic graces pass through thy hands before coming to us. O Mary, show us, reveal to us the part that thou didst take in the loving economy of the Holy Eucharist!"

Such is the cry that forcibly escapes from the heart when before the Blessed Sacrament. If in the Gospel Mary is so closely united with her Son, if the Magi found Him only with His Mother, prostrate before the same Infant, still more lowly, still more lovable in the Eucharist, we shall see there His mother also: "*Et invenerunt Puerum cum Maria Matre ejus*—And they found the Child with Mary, His Mother." (*Matt. ii.*)

Guided by love, the devout Christian has already given to Mary names expressive of his desire to associate the Mother to the homage rendered the Son in the Blessed Sacrament. We have, for instance, *Our Lady of First Communion*, a sweet title full of love and touching reality.

At Maureon, Brittany, there is a beautiful sanctuary, which is the centre of a "*Confraternity of Thanksgiving*," the members of which pledge themselves to thank God incessantly for His benefits, especially for the unspeakable gift of the Eucharist.

How could it be that Mary would not have part in such a work, she, the most grateful of creatures, she

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who first sang under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, her *Magnificat*, that canticle of thanksgiving *par excellence*? A beautiful window in the apse of the church represents Mary kneeling before the Sacred Host in an ecstasy of thanksgiving, repeating her *Magnificat*.

At Lyons, we have *Our Lady of Viaticum*, to whom prayers are offered to obtain for the agonizing the Adorable Sacrament, the pledge of a peaceful death and a happy awakening in the glory of God. Mary is implored to renew the mystery of her Visitation and again to carry Jesus to those that His love wills to visit.

Christian art has everywhere spread a pious inspiration which applies well to our subject. Who has not seen *Our Lady of the Tabernacle* sometimes kneeling before the prison of love which incloses her Son; or sometimes, according to the words of Scripture, herself the tabernacle, showing us in her heart the place which the Most High sanctified and in which He took His delight?

The Christian soul adores in union with Mary. She comes with Mary to visit the Prisoner of Love, and her visit is better made. She is more faithful and, inspired by Mary's presence and example, she finds words more consoling, a gift more generous to offer to the Divine Captive of the Eucharist.

Long ago, M. Olier, in order to offer us the most perfect model of Holy Communion, had an exquisite picture drawn representing St. John communicating Our Blessed Lady, laying upon the trembling lips of the Mother the Adorable Body of the Son: *Ecce Filius tuus!*—In this picture is often found this legend:

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*Filius adoptivus matri reddīt Filium.*—The adopted son restores to his mother her own Son.”

The life of union with Jesus, the life of Communion, is advisably represented under another subject: Mary, her eyes lowered and attentively fixed upon the Host which she has in her heart, seems to be entirely absorbed in Jesus. She is presented to us as the perfect realization of that word of St. Paul: “*I live no longer. It is Jesus who lives in me.*”

At Solesmes, we gaze in rapture at a very old picture of Mary communicated by Jesus Christ Himself. The Blessed Virgin almost swooning from the ardor of her love, is supported by the Prince of the Apostles while Jesus, rejoicing to restore to His Mother what He had received from her, lays upon her lips His Sacred Body hidden under the snowy Eucharistic Species.

All these productions of faith and piety give us a little insight into the close and ineffable relations between Mary and the Eucharist. “I marvel,” says a pious writer, “that after all these titles, a church has not yet been raised to Mary under that of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament.”

That desire has been accomplished. In the churches of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, the Lady Chapel is dedicated to Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Venerable Père Eymard left his devotion to his sons as the legacy of his love, recommending them to practise it fervently among themselves, and to spread it by every means afforded by Christian piety.

OUR LADY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT!—  
Such is the title that this venerable Religious “raised



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up by God," as says the Bishop of Tarbes, "to develop among us by his word, his writings, and his Congregation, the sublime devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament," has chosen in order to sum up all the relations that bind Mary to the Eucharist.

This title differs from those enumerated above only in this, that it is more expressive, that it comprises them all. The others honor only one phase of Mary's Eucharistic life, recall only one of her relations to the Blessed Sacrament. But the title: *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, embraces them all, comprehends the whole adoring life of the Blessed Virgin. Still more, this title penetrates the very mystery of the Eucharist and when well understood manifests to us the most important part granted to Mary in the economy of the Holy Eucharist.

If we thoroughly seize Venerable Père Eymard's thought contained in the title, *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, we understand that she is, first, the Mother of Jesus, giving to the Word her most pure blood, which was changed on the day of the Incarnation into His own Body, into His own Blood that He might consecrate it later on the night of the Last Supper into His Sacrament of Love.

*Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament* is, in the second place, Mary receiving in quality of universal dispensatrix of grace, the full and absolute disposition of the Eucharist and the graces that It contains, because this Sacrament is the most efficacious means of salvation, the fruit *par excellence* of the Redemption of Jesus Christ. To her consequently, it belongs to make Jesus in the Sacrament known and loved; to her it belongs to spread the Eucharist throughout the world, to

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multiply churches, to raise them in infidel lands, and to defend faith in the Eucharist against heretics and the impious; to her it belongs to prepare souls for Communion, to rouse them to make frequent visits to Jesus and to assist zealously at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. She is the treasure-house of all the graces comprised in the Eucharist, both those that prepare the soul for It and those that flow from It.

In both cases it is Mary who gives the Eucharist to the world. In the first place, she is intrinsically united to the very essence of the mystery, inasmuch as she herself furnished the matter, the subject for It, namely, her Son; in the second, she applies the Eucharist to every one of us, she distributes It. She is the means of Its exterior life, of Its expansion, the instrument of the good that It effects in souls.

Again and above all, *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament* is Mary living for over twenty years after the Ascension of Our Lord, at the foot of the altar, passing her life in the Cenacle nourished by the Eucharist, adoring her Son veiled under the Sacred Species, assisting at the Holy Sacrifice; in a word, Mary fulfilling toward the Most Holy Sacrament all the duties of a humble child of the Church and making it her duty to serve Him of whom she is the Divine Mother.

When Venerable Père Eymard proposes the title: *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, he tells us: "It is the new title of something very ancient," for since the existence of the Eucharist, the relations that bind Mary to her Son have also existed. Let us here remark that we were greatly encouraged in our design of spreading this devotion, by the Bishop of Angers.

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To a petition supplicating him to bless this *new* devotion, His Lordship exclaimed: "No, no! Strike that out! The devotion of *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament* is not a *new* devotion, for at all times Mary has been honored in the Church as the Mother of the Eucharistic Christ."

In addressing his spiritual sons, Venerable Père Eymard enthusiastically exclaimed: "We are the body-guard of the Adorable Person of Our Lord living in the Eucharist. We belong to the Son, but to the Mother also. We adore the Son, we revere the Mother. To persevere in the grace of our call and correspond to it fully, we must honor the Blessed Virgin before all as *Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament*. "This was the great title he gave to Mary," says one of our present-day writers, "never to be forgotten and always to be loved by her children, yea, till the last evening of time it shall go down the ages as one of the brightest jewels of Mary's crown."

Pius X, the Pope of the Eucharist has approved this title and granted an Indulgence of 300 *days to the invocation when said before the Most Blessed Sacrament exposed*. December 30, 1905.

On the 1st of May, 1868, being at St. Maurice, a little country-house which he had taken far away from the noise and bustle of Paris to be, as he expressed it, "a little paradise for such of the members of the Adoration as Our Lord called to a more contemplative life," Father Eymard opened the exercises for the month of Mary. He ended a beautiful allocution on our duties toward this good Mother in the following words:

"Well, let us honor Mary under the title of '*Our*

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*Lady of the Most Holy Sacrament.* 'Yes, let us say, with confidence and love, 'Our Lady of the Most Holy Sacrament, Mother and Model for all adorers, pray for us who have recourse to thee!'"

The good Father was radiant, his voice trembled with emotion. He felt as if he had been able thus to pay a debt of gratitude to her who had first led him to the tabernacle, and who had sustained and encouraged him with such maternal solicitude in the first foundation of his society. "Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament—it is only a new name for an ancient truth," he would say. "We revere, with reason, all the mysteries in the life of the Mother of God. Contemplative and domestic souls have found an example in her existence in Nazareth; broken hearts, consolation in our Lady of Dolors, the power to make great sacrifices, to stand with her at the foot of the Cross. Mary lived fifteen years after the Ascension of her Divine Son. How did she spend those weary days of exile? What fresh grace may be gathered from this important part of her life? The Book of Acts seems to tell us clearly enough. The first Christians, it is there said, lived in union and peace, in the most ardent charity, sighing for martyrdom, and to prepare themselves worthily for it, persevering in the 'breaking of bread'—(*Acts ii. 42*).

"Living on and by the Eucharist, gathering round the tabernacle to pray and sing spiritual canticles, such was the distinctive character of the primitive Church as recorded by St. Luke; such also was the *résumé* of the last years of the Blessed Virgin, who found in the adorable Host, the blessed Fruit of her womb, and in the life of union with Our Lord in His tabernacle,

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the happy times of Bethlehem and Nazareth. Yes, it was Mary, above all others, who persevered in the 'breaking of bread.' Eucharistic souls, who wish to live only for the Blessed Sacrament, who have made the Eucharist your centre and His service your only work, Mary is your model, her life your grace. Only persevere with her in the '*breaking of bread.*' . . .

"Our Lord," he continued, "having given us Mary for our mother, we must honor and love her as her children. But to enter into the spirit of our vocation, and make all tend toward that one end, we must study and strive to imitate the life of Mary in the upper chamber, and her devotion to the service, the love of the Blessed Sacrament. Mary stood on the mount of Calvary to die there with Jesus. She came down with the beloved disciple, the son of her adoption, and recommenced her maternity at the foot of the Sacred Host.

"Oh, do not fear, if you are the elect of the Blessed Eucharist! It is to Mary that you owe it. It is she who has led you by the hand to our Saviour's feet. Put yourself under her direction and, to become faithful servants of your King Jesus, be devout children to Mary, who is the mother of Our Lord's servants. She is the only perfect imitator of the virtues of her Divine Son. She has the secret of His Love. Her great mission is to form Jesus in us. It is a mother's part to train and educate her children. It seems as if when He was dying, Jesus said to Mary, 'I bequeath into your hands the fruit of My redemption, the salvation of men, the service of the Sacrament of My Love. Form for Me adorers in spirit and in truth who shall serve Me and adore Me as you have done.' In your communications with Jesus therefore

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think of Mary. Try to speak as she would have done, imitate her habits, act as she did, share in her love and in her sufferings, and all in Mary will say to you, 'Jesus! what can I do for the better serving of Jesus, for the greater glory of Jesus?' The life of Mary in the cœnaculum should be the type of yours. Throw yourself on your knees beside her, adore with her. What a profound, interior, intimate adoration was hers! Everything in Mary lost itself and was absorbed in her Son. A current of grace united the Heart of Jesus in the Host with the heart of Mary, the adorer. Two flames mingled in one fire—a fire of glory and of love. God was perfectly adored by His Mother, who was His creation. . . . What a joy to Jesus when He received that homage from His Blessed Mother! How happy He must have felt at having for her consolation left her His Sacramental Presence! I believe that He would have instituted the Blessed Eucharist for Mary alone. . . .

"When you go to Holy Communion," added Père Eymard, "strive to unite yourself to her wishes, and go to Communion with her faith and love. Is it not the custom for mothers to adorn and beautify even with their own ornaments the child who is about to be led to the nuptial altar? At Cana did not Mary spare the confusion of the newly-married couple, and throw the cloak of her Son's power over their indigence? Oh, yes, the best preparation for Holy Communion is that which is made by Mary, and Jesus will come to you far more willingly if He sees in you the faithful imitators of His Holy Mother. Mary in the supper-room must likewise have looked after all things necessary for the Holy Sacrifice. Can we not

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fancy her making the linen with holy, skilful hands? When you too are working for the worship of the Eucharist, unite your intention to the joy of your Mother working for her Son in His Sacramental Presence as formerly she worked for Him as an infant. This thought will make you happy. . . .

“The intimate knowledge of Our Lord which belonged to the Blessed Virgin, more penetrating than that of seraphim or cherubim, gave her a perfect acquaintance with the Heart of Jesus, and therefore she understood better than any human or angelic creature the immensity of the gift of the Eucharist. She knew all the sacrifices of Jesus, and the struggles it had cost His Soul when He instituted this Divine Sacrament, just as she knew His anguish in the Garden of Olives. She foresaw all that her Divine Son would have to drink of ignominy and outrage in order to perpetuate His Presence in the midst of ungrateful men. When Jesus before the Last Supper announced to Mary that the hour was come for the triumph of His love, that He was about to institute the adorable Sacrament, by means of which all Christians throughout all countries could partake of the happiness of union with Him, and become in Holy Communion one with their Saviour and their God,—Mary adored in deepest gratitude. . . . She consented to put off the hour of her reward and to remain on earth to guard and serve the Blessed Eucharist, and to teach other Christians to guard, to love, and to adore this Sacrament of Love. What a mother! What a model! Happy were the disciples who could adore beside Mary and learn from her august mouth how to serve their Saviour Jesus!”



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This was Père Eymard's last tribute to the glory of the Blessed Eucharist. Mary hastened to crown the devoted child who at the close of his life had inscribed on the altar dedicated to her the title, "*Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.*"

## VI

### THE WORKS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

#### THE FIRST COMMUNION OF POOR ADULTS

“ALL for Jesus present in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar!” In order to propagate the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, Père Eymard resolved to draw all classes of society under the direct influence of that Sun of Love. Three Works, differing in means and ends, but all comprised in one same idea, were the lasting results of his apostolate. These Works were: *The Work for Adults*, *The Work for Priests*, *The Work of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament*, or *The People's Eucharistic League*, and *The Eucharistic Weeks*.

By that of the *First Communion of Poor Adults*, he brought back to Our Lord those to whom He had not been lavish in earthly goods, because He intended to show them greater marks of His love. By the *Archconfraternity of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, he wished to crown with glory and new life the devotion of the Faithful, by giving to them as nourishment and rallying point, the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. The good God did not permit His servant to realize the third desire of His courageous soul which was to erect a home for fallen priests. He was however able to point out its end and describe its spirit. His spiritual children will not allow that dearest idea of his heart to go unfulfilled. Later on they will give it form and substance.

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We can not better explain the end of the Work for Adults than by culling from the notes of the holy Founder.

"The aim of this Work, which Mgr. Sibour, of happy memory, joyfully welcomed into this diocese, is to seek out, to teach, and to prepare for First Communion all adults who are no longer of an age to attend the catechetical lessons given to the children of the parish, also for those whose daily labor prevents them from attending those instructions.

"The number of boys who have not made their First Communion is very large. Hundreds may be found in Paris, and among them many who have not even been baptized. Now, a youth who has never received the principles of a Christian education, and who consequently, has never been prepared for First Communion, may be looked upon as lost to the Church. He usually follows his evil inclinations. His passions govern him. A bad son, he will become a bad husband, a bad father, and almost always a bad citizen. The only aim of his life is to gain his bread. He knows neither God nor Jesus Christ, his Saviour. He is a real barbarian with all the vices of civilization.

"They who do the best recruiting work in this line are the little ones themselves. Grateful for the kindness and affection lavished on them by their good teachers, they rarely fail after their First Communion to bring some poor young man or woman, an elder brother or sister perhaps, to kneel every Sunday at the First Communion rail. How often too, they have returned even with father or mother now determined to make good the omission of the past!

"If all do not go so far, nevertheless the parents

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are easily reached through the intervention of the children. With a certain feeling of pride, they assist at the festive day of their children and, when later on they have perhaps fallen sick, the children of the Work at once notify the priest. How many marriages made good as the fruit of the children's First Communion! The little ones are truly the apostles of the family! . . ."

How touching to behold Père Eymard after the evening Office, so gentle, so kind, in the midst of those poor, tired, hardworking young people, encouraging them and offering them the bread of Christian truth! They knew neither God nor themselves. They quickly reached the limit of their understanding and exhausted the stores of their memory. But their good teacher possessed the tact of chaining their attention by his clear and simple instructions. By the time of their First Communion, they knew the mysteries of our holy religion, the duties of a child to God, the obligations of a good son and of a man loyal to his fellow-men. At the public examination which followed, many frequently surpassed what might have been expected from intelligence so late in development.

When the day for their First Communion drew near, they asked their employers for a two days' holiday, in order to prepare better by a little Retreat for the coming of Our Lord. Père Eymard preached for them three times every day. He explained to them the Sacrament of Penance, and led them earnestly to desire Holy Communion by telling them about Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

"What I want you to carry away from this Retreat," he would say, "is the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

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Without that, First Communion will be of little avail to you. Your catechism has told you who He is. You know Him then, and you ought to love Him also.

“My poor children, you will have to struggle through life. This you already know by experience; and you also know your numerous enemies. Do you know that right by you, you have a Friend to help you? He is there. That friend is Jesus Christ! When in a church, you are near Him. Behold Him there! He is exposed! He is ready to listen to all who want to speak to Him. Do you notice the candles burning? When at night you see a light in the window of some house, you know that some one is in that room. Light is a sign of life, of wakefulness. The good God is there! When there are no candles, there is a lamp. Jesus Christ is there! Salute Him with a genuflection. And if you should meet Him in the street, in the hands of the priest, kneel down. Would you be ashamed of the Lord, your God?

“You know Him now. You ought also to love Him, for He loves you. Do you believe that the Lord loves you?—‘But what does He give me, since He loves me?’—Ah! is it then only by presents that we recognize affection?—‘But I have nothing pleasing that can attract upon me the kind notice of Our Lord and make Him love me!’—That is true, my children. And the world also which seeks only its own interest, thinks little of you. It is satisfied only when you are working for it. But the good God is very different! He loves you infinitely, because you make Him think of His Son, His Well-Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, poor workman that you are! He has given you His Mother, and you love your good Mother very much. But you

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must love Our Lord more, because He has given her to you, because He preserves her to you."

On the happy day, they gathered around the holy altar. The good Père Eymard, in his noble charity, had thought of the poor, had provided them with clothes suitable to the occasion. With candle in hand, and a medal of the Blessed Virgin on their breast, they were full of joy and happiness. All the assistants and above all their relatives, rejoiced with them. The parents of many saw that their sons were loved and cared for, and that touched their heart.

Saintly Père Eymard then began Holy Mass in an audible tone, and at the proper time gave them a last word of instruction, to which all listened attentively. "Rejoice," he said, "my poor children, rejoice! This is the happiest day of your life. You are the princes of this feast! What then are you going to give to Jesus, to Him who is going to give you all that He has? Know, my dear children, that He is going to give Himself to you. This is a mystery which you can not comprehend. Can any one comprehend the good God? Can you understand that for you bread is changed into Flesh and Blood? No! And yet it really is. By the words of Consecration, the bread is changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. And you, every one of you, believe that. . . .

"When Jesus shall have entered your breast, you must say to Him all the nice things possible. It is not hard to receive Jesus well, to entertain Him well. He is strong and mighty to help you always. All that He asks is that you stay with Him. . . ."

After Holy Communion, Père Eymard always had a good breakfast prepared for his children, and the

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whole day was spent joyously. Sometimes a large number received the Sacrament of Confirmation, while all renewed their Baptismal Vows and were consecrated to our Blessed Lady.

"Doubtless all did not persevere," said Père Eymard, "but there was always a goodly number who returned. They were invited to make their Easter every year, and almost all of them accepted the invitation. They feel that we know them and love them and it is besides, very pleasing to them to revisit the church or chapel in which they made their First Communion. In every case, it is a red-letter day in their life. Later, they are married in the church, and when the day of trial comes, they again rejoice, recalling the solemn moment of their First Communion, which will never be entirely obliterated from their memory."

Père Eymard had a special affection for this Work. "We would not give it up for anything in the world," he used to say. If he could not give the catechetical instructions himself, he wished at least to hear the confessions of his children. He gave them the Retreat and distributed to them the Holy Communion.

He had, besides all this, always some one or other more advanced in age, to prepare for First Communion or to instruct for the Sacrament of Matrimony. He undertook all this in the evening after the tiresome labors of the day. He gave the greatest attention to, lavished the greatest affection on his poor people. After instructing them, he baptized them, gave them First Communion, or married them, as the case required.

One rainy afternoon in February, 1868, he returned home tired and wet with a sharp pain in the chest.



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He had been to a distant parish to bless the marriage of two of his newly converted.

"You should not have gone so far in this bad weather," they said to him.

"That is true," he replied, "but the poor people are now so happy!"

### THE WORK OF PRIEST-ADORERS

One of the witnesses in the cause of the Venerable Founder's Beatification, himself a Father of the Blessed Sacrament, deposed as follows: "It is a rule among us never to leave Adoration during our hour of service for any reason whatsoever. Only one exception is made, and that is in favor of priests. The Servant of God himself so ordained it. He used to say: Oh, the priests! I would quit everything for priests! With them we have parishes, and that is the most excellent of all works." Oh, how he loved them! Nothing cost him when there was question of instructing, consoling, and relieving them. When Director of the Tertiaries of Mary, he had established a special branch for priests and labored to sanctify them. When any of them visited our Community, he showed them the greatest respect. He left his Adoration to receive them, something he never did for any laic, no matter who he might be. The priestly dignity he esteemed at its proper value, while fully alive to its heavy responsibility. He showed the greatest respect toward the newly ordained, whom he was ever ready to help generously. He imposed upon his Religious the duty of always showing them kindness, of receiving them charitably and honorably, seeing in

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them Jesus Christ Himself. He ardently desired to do still more. In the first place, he resolved to number among the chief Apostolic Works of the Society of the Blessed Sacrament that of receiving into its Sanctuaries of Adoration all priests who might desire to spend some days at the foot of the holy tabernacle. Many who could not do more on account of distance and numerous occupations, might be able to avail themselves of such an opportunity.

"Sanctify the priests by the Eucharist. That embraces everything. With the priests, we have the parishes, the whole country," were Père Eymard's frequent words. Again when speaking with Père Tesnière some months before his death, he exclaimed: "*Now listen! I want to get the priests. That is our principal apostolate.*"

His spiritual sons have well seized the idea of their Founder and sought to realize it. The Association of Priest-Adorers, the Priests' Eucharistic League, numbers to-day in all parts of the world more than 50,000 members. Père Eymard used to say: "TO LABOR FOR PRIESTS IS TO LABOR FOR MULTIPLIERS. *Let the Holy Eucharist become the centre of their thoughts, the end of their labors, and they will have at their disposal the most efficient means for the conversion and sanctification of their people.* Let them find in Jesus of the tabernacle a Friend in their loneliness, insurmountable strength in their struggles, constantly renewed vigor in their weariness, for He is the Source of grace, which produces abundant fruits. Satisfied to be the instruments of which God makes use, they should allow themselves to be guided by Him. Their influence over souls will be doubled, and

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we may confidently expect from them the assistance that is to save the world." He entertained the idea of founding a Sacerdotal Society aggregated to that of the Fathers of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and he had even written out the Rules for it. He said: "I want to form a Society of secular priests, to bind them together by prayer, by determinate statutes, and to sanctify them by the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. This work is ours, but I do not want to undertake it now on a large scale. Oh, when will the time come! Priests sharing in the life of the Blessed Sacrament, should live according to the Eucharistic life of Jesus, which consists above all in self-abnegation and the love of sacrifice. They should remember that, scattered all over the world, they ought to devote themselves to the propagation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. They should perform all their duties under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, the Adoratrice of the Cenacle, for through that sweet Mother we more easily approach Jesus. Their studies, their energy, and their piety they should direct to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. They should bear in mind that personal Adoration is their chief duty: *Nos autem orationi instantes erimus*—But we will give ourselves continually to prayer." (*Acts VI, 4.*)

"Like Moses full of zeal to announce the teaching of the Divine Master when he came down from Mount Sinai, like the Apostles after the Last Supper, so should the priests of this Society go from the church straight to the people to announce to them the word of God: *Et ministerio verbi*—To the ministry of the word (*Acts VI, 4.*) They should bind themselves to defend always and under all circumstances the inter-

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ests and the honor of Jesus Christ, and by every possible means to multiply visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament as well as frequent and daily Communion. In a word, in all their actions, they should unite with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the eternal High Priest, the Model of the grace of the priesthood."

"I have a very great desire," Père Eymard once remarked, "to be able to afford priests the opportunity to spend their last days at the foot of the altar." This was a desire long entertained by him. In 1856, he wrote: "Is there any retreat more honorable for the veterans of the priesthood after sacrificing their whole life to the service of the Lord, after growing gray under their spiritual arms and fighting the battles of the Lord, than one in which to spend the rest of their days at the feet of their King? There, they could halt on their journey to eternity and prepare themselves better to appear before their Judge. They would still serve according to their strength. The feeble would be treated charitably as are our own venerable Fathers. From time to time, they would visit the Blessed Sacrament in order to render, so to speak, their life more endurable, chilled as it is by an icy coating of old age and suffering. They who might be able to fulfil some portion of Eucharistic duty, would do so."

Despite Père Eymard's perseverance in this earnest desire for a retreat for aged ecclesiastics, despite the sanction of the Sovereign Pontiff, his design was never realized. In fact, such retreats are ordinarily distasteful. They for whom they are intended, dread them. They appear to them like the threshold of the tomb. The priest can not live in inaction, in solitude.

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But in a Cenacle, where are performed the solemnities of Eucharistic worship, around the altar whereon is exposed the Most Blessed Sacrament, the priest feels his devotion enlivened, his courage revived, and he there serves his apprenticeship for eternity. It becomes for him a real heaven on earth, a recompense for the labors of his past life, those zealous efforts in the vineyard of his Master, which exhausted his strength, though without extinguishing the fires of his soul.

This was the way in which Père Eymard loved priests. These Works of the Congregation of secular priests, and his Cenacle for aged Priests would without doubt, have been very pleasing and very dear to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He loves His priest with so great a love that He gives him the Blessed Sacrament by which He renews His Humanity and lives in the Faithful! The priest is co-laborer with the Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Jesus all alone can not distribute His graces and do good to those around Him. He is bound, and the priest is powerless without the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Père Eymard formulated the plan of these two Works, in order to unite the servant more closely to his Master, but God alone knows when this grand organization will be realized.

We cull some instances of his love for the clergy from the testimonies rendered of him as a confessor. From his own lips we have the following: "One day, at Fourvière, I wanted to make a review of conscience in the confessional. But the priest cut me short with the word *Misereatur*. I thought he was pressed for time, but not at all. It was to make me a long ex-

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hortation. I would never do that. I love priests so well that I listen to all they have to say."

The Servant of God took great pains to form souls to the priesthood. A newly ordained tells us: "I considered him a very holy priest, very exact in discharging his duties. Every evening he took me with him to Allevard for a long visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and to this visit he attached great importance. I saw that he wanted to form me to the pious practice, for I was a young priest at the time."

"During some twenty days that I spent with him at Allevard," writes another, "Père Eymard edified us by his piety and charmed us by his conversation. He spoke of God without affectation, turning his words that way naturally and without effort, for He was the ordinary subject of his thoughts. His manner had about it something so amiable and ingenious that it captivated his hearers and proclaimed him a man of God. Two great thoughts seemed always to occupy his mind and stir his soul, namely, the love of the Blessed Sacrament and the sanctification of the priest. They formed the frequent subject of his conversation."

His sincerity, uprightness, artlessness, and unaffected simplicity gave him an irresistible ascendancy over souls, but it never degenerated into weakness.

## VII

### THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT, OR THE PEOPLE'S EUCHARISTIC LEAGUE, AND THE WORK OF THE EUCHARISTIC WEEKS

**B**ETWEEN the child of the poor workman doomed before his time to labor far above his strength, and the Servant of God who, by his noble character, his learning, and his virtue, is found in the first ranks of society, there are innumerable Christians among whom are many faithful souls filled with zeal and courage for Jesus Christ and His Church. Père Ey-mard understood that the Eucharistic reign of King Jesus could not be firmly established unless the Christian life was penetrated with the idea of the Blessed Sacrament Itself, as well as of Jesus' love in His Sacrament of the Altar. This could be effected only by giving to the Blessed Sacrament the place of honor that belongs to It. Now this is the end of the Guard of Honor of the Blessed Sacrament. Its obligations may be summed up in two words: Every member engages to make once a month an hour of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed or enclosed in the tabernacle. This is the personal service. To it he adds in order to keep alive his ardor, a zealous coöperation in all works that more especially relate to the Blessed Sacrament.

The Tabernacle Society, the providing for the lamps of poor churches, find in him an active member, happy to contribute to the splendor of Eucharistic devotion.



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But above all is he obliged to prepare a worthy reception for Jesus when the priest bears Him to the sick whither he accompanies him thereby rendering to Jesus the homage of his faith and love.

When possible, he is found at Benediction, for there he receives magnificent graces along with the blessing of his King. In fine, the members of the Eucharistic League aim at being present whenever and wherever they can do homage to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, for they look upon Him as their King and on themselves as His special courtiers. This one word explains all—the King and His courtiers.

Père Eymard had the consolation of beholding around Jesus exposed in the Blessed Sacrament groups of chosen souls banded together in the association known as "The Eucharistic Weeks." The members concur in honoring the King personally by their generous offerings for the adornment of His royal throne. They take alternate weeks of Eucharistic service and, should other duties at any time prevent a member from taking this hour of Adoration, he offers a wax candle to burn before his King and tell Him of his love and devotedness.

But all this is not enough. They desire to see their Lord's throne surrounded by the most beautiful flowers, the offering of inanimate nature which on its side must also sing, "Hosanna! to the God of Love." Their beauty and profusion at all seasons of the year proclaim to those that enter the sacred precincts the faith that understands and the love that knows how to make little sacrifices for the Eucharistic King. There were not wanting descendants of the Pharisees to complain of this extravagance, to deplore

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the waste, as they termed it, of what might, according to their stupid ideas, be applied to better service.

To such objections Père Eymard replied: "Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is King. He is there a living King. Give Him then a royal worship. A king traverses the streets of a city, but no one acclaims him, no one salutes him. 'Is he indeed a king?' the people ask. 'No,' they reply, 'it is some stranger.' . . . But here is Our Lord, Our King! Where is the external and public homage due to His Divine Majesty?" . . . Then, casting a glance over the world, he continued: "Gifts to churches measure the faith of a people. Faith lives in Italy, in Spain. In France it has been frozen by Jansenism, but it will revive. That faith which wishes to lie hidden, which looks upon what is given to the Lord as useless, is a leaven of Protestantism. True, we are bound to give to the poor; but Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is our special Poor One, and His suffering members will receive so much the more as His share is the greater." With such words as these the Servant of God silenced the ignorant.

But to noble, generous souls, he spoke in a different strain. They believe and love. To them he used to say: "To give to Jesus is an honor, a consolation, a need of the loving heart! According to the conventional order of things, it does not belong to every one to make gifts to royalty. Would we dare present to a person, though only a little above us, a bouquet of flowers on his feast day, much less treat familiarly with him? But Jesus receives the homage of all, the farthing of the widow, as well as the rich man's gift. And what a consolation for the loving soul to be able

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to say: 'I give straight to God something out of my savings, some of my daily bread, some of the fruits of my labor. I can share with Jesus!' . . . And, in fact, without your offerings, without these brilliant decorations, Jesus could not be exposed solemnly. You surround Him according to His regal dignity. Say to Him freely: 'Thou art reigning on a brilliant throne which our hearts have erected for Thee!' . . . Oh! may you often have the happiness of being able to say: 'I have given to the Lord!' "

"To serve and adore Our Lord is the double duty of the Eucharistic League. By the Eucharistic service, the Holy Father, Pope Pius IX, understood that we enter upon it in order to arrive at forgetfulness of self and the sole desire of pleasing Our Lord. By so doing, adorers have in the accomplishment of their duties a real and ever-present end. Jesus reigns over their life while they are laboring for Him and with Him."

Let us turn again to the Venerable Père Eymard and hearken to his fuller explanation of this point. "The members of the Eucharistic League," he says, "may think themselves again in those blessed days of yearly Retreat when they assembled in large numbers to hear the instructions. Life is in accordance with what we love. *Trahit sua quemque voluptas*. Self-love renders it egotistical; the love of the world, vicious; but the love of God makes it good and happy.

"But as all love must have a beginning, a centre, and an end, Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament will be the beginning, the centre, and the end of the adorer. Without doubt, one may arrive at perfection by struggle against self, by a hard and difficult life,

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which is constantly obliged to calculate the problem of loss and gain. In such an existence, both liberty and pleasure are wanting, since one lives in the continual sacrifice imposed by the different virtues.

"And yet Jesus never said: 'Live in humility, in penitence, or in any other virtue.' No, they are not a centre. In them the soul would be, as it were, in prison, and besides, penitence and humility in themselves are not lovable. But Jesus has said: 'Abide in My Love,' and thence proceed to the observance of My Commandments, as 'I Myself live in the love of My Father and observe His Commandments.'" (*John XV, 9, 10.*)

Live by love! These words almost intimidate, for are they not addressed to perfect souls, separated from the world and dead to self?

"*Live by Love!*" responds the Venerable Servant of God, "this is the part of all, of beginners, as well as of those that are already on the path of perfection, or who have almost reached the end of their journey. *To live by love* belongs to man both as a man and a Christian." Oh, what influence, what effect has love upon man! It guides him, it governs him.

"God is infinite love. Man created to the image of God is also love, but a weakened love, vitiated by sin, nevertheless capable of returning to its origin. God comes to man by love, and love will be the return of man to God."

The Servant of God insists on this point: "Man is incapable of attaching himself in God to any other thing than to His love and goodness. He fears His power, and His divine sanctity overwhelms the sinner with shame and confusion. . . . But the divine

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goodness! . . . Oh! this ought to attract us irresistibly, making us understand that it was by it God descended among us. It is only in His deep humiliations that we can unite ourselves to God and call Him our Brother and ourselves His brethren in Adam."

Undoubtedly, these are the ends of the People's Eucharistic League. The members should be firmly convinced that the Lord loves them personally with an infinite love, and that He remains in the Blessed Sacrament to receive therein a reciprocal love in response to that desire of their God.

"He has loved me! He has loved me!" they exclaim with Saint Paul, "for He gives Himself entirely to me, and to me alone. I will love Him in return!" Above all, will they try to return love for love. Instead of living for self, they will think on the Lord and labor for Him, all their ambition being to please and serve the Master. This is all that they desire. By it they are sufficiently recompensed, having conceived in their heart the word "*Gratias!*" If they comprehend how powerful their lever, shall not the members find in this desire of pleasing their Master the most natural tendency of man?

"In view of some sacrifice," continues Père Eymard, "look upon Our Lord, at least in thought. 'O my God, who hast so loved me, I wish to love Thee more than this sacrifice, more than this mortification, more than this difficulty. I shall support this trial in order to return Thee a little love for Thy great love!' After an act like this, the sacrifice will cost you little or nothing, for you shall already have made it in your heart."

The life of love has its sacrifices. "It is very easy,"

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says Père Eymard, "to say to the good God: 'My God, I love Thee with my whole heart.' You may even come to say it in your sleep. But love shows itself by action. If you follow the law of God, you will make progress in virtue. According to that, I shall decide whether or not you live by love. The first consequence of man's love for God is continual war against self-love. True love is not content with shunning evil. It goes still farther. It exerts all its strength in the practice of mortification, which consists in self-abnegation."

But to live with Jesus Christ, we must nourish our soul on His Sacrament. Holy Communion—this is the food and, at the same time, the recompense, the end of the life of love.

Père Eymard spoke very often of Holy Communion. He considered It from every point of view. We might fill a book with his ideas concerning this important subject, but we shall limit ourselves to quoting what relates to the subject in hand, namely, to show that Holy Communion is the nourishment of the life of love in the members of the Eucharistic League. "Render yourselves more fit to receive Holy Communion," says Père Eymard, "regarding that sacred action as the highest point of the spiritual life, the Christian life, for it is in Holy Communion that you learn to know Love and that you receive all graces. Let it be the pivot on which the life of a member of the Eucharistic League turns. Love is recognized by gifts. When one possesses nothing, he gives himself. But Jesus gives not only His adorable Person, but along with It all that He possesses. He, then, who communicates, knows what is the love of God, and measures its

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extent. God Himself can do nothing more. . . . And in order to love Our Lord truly, we must receive Him often. Without that, we may love Him as Creator, as Father of the glory to come, even as Benefactor; but we shall never love Him as a Friend, with the love of a friend. The Apostles had received Him only once when Jesus called them His friends. How will it be with us who receive Him so often? Oh! let us frequently approach the Holy Table if we would know the love and the sweetness of Jesus!"

"Holy Communion will be for a member of the Eucharistic League the motive, the spring of his whole life. All his actions will be preparation for or thanksgiving after it. The thought that he is working for Jesus, that he is to receive Him soon, will be his support and encouragement.

"In the morning he offers thanks to Jesus for having graciously willed to give Himself to him; and when evening comes, he offers everything in preparation for the Communion of the next day. Then every action becomes a flower which he eagerly hastens to present before it fades; his devotion is lively, his heart is always turned to Jesus. This should be the whole life of the adorer.

"He who communicates rarely may preserve his state of grace for heaven, but how far off that heaven is! What faith does he not need to see it at so great a distance! The thought of it does not give actual strength and encouragement. But he who communicates often easily preserves the state of grace. It is for to-morrow as for to-day. It is the 'wedding garment,' the ticket of admission to the feast. He tries to keep it pure and unsullied in order not to be deprived of Holy Communion.



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“Without Holy Communion, great strength is needed for the pursuit of virtue; for acquiring the meekness of the Lamb, one must drink His Blood.

“The Lord has not placed joy and happiness in the practice of virtue nor in the contemplation of His mysteries. The sweet happiness that inundates us and in which we find marvellous dignity, charming sweetness, Jesus procures for us in giving Himself to us.”

This apostolate is in the reach of all. “Truly, I believe in the graces granted by the Most Blessed Sacrament,” said the Servant of God. “The Blessed Sacrament sheds a perfume that embalms even the wicked. . . . Because of that, O ye mothers, wives, sisters,—oh, approach the Holy Table often, and carry Jesus into your homes! He is a fire that while inflaming your own heart, will warm all your surroundings. . . . They will breathe the Blessed Sacrament. The meekness that you will draw from Holy Communion, and which will shine forth in all your conduct, will first make you loved, and afterward Him whom you receive. Oh, have great confidence in the Presence of Jesus!”

According to Père Eymard, what are the conditions for daily Communion? There is only one, and that is purity. Jesus comes to us because of our purity. Are you in the state of grace? Are you hungry? Come, then, and eat. Still more, Holy Communion renders the practice of virtue easy, and struggle and sacrifice pleasing.

“Virtue is difficult,” says Père Eymard, “yet it is one of the qualities of Jesus with which we have to clothe ourselves. But our nature recoils.

“In Holy Communion, Jesus forms Himself in us,

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He becomes the Master of every one of us in particular. Then virtue becomes easy. In the Cenacle, souls are quickly formed to all the graces of the Lord. He labors on the soul, and soon all the Saviour's virtues are reflected in our life. Holy Communion is the mould, the form of Jesus in our soul, for Our Lord pronounced this inexpressible word: *'He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, shall abide in Me and I in him!'*

"It costs one little to humble himself after having received in Holy Communion Jesus, who is humility itself. How easy does the virtue of gentleness become under the influence of Jesus' tender goodness, giving Himself to us in the love of His Sacred Heart! Even the Cross itself loses all its bitterness when we know that Jesus Crucified is in our heart.

"Holy Communion attracts to virtue all who come in contact with the daily and frequent communicant.

"There are some kinds of virtue that are not amiable or attractive to others, those that are gained by struggle and sacrifice. Say not, where are my virtues? for this is not the moment to render an account of them. Think rather of not possessing them, humble yourself profoundly, and ardently sigh for them. My satisfaction does not lie in merely not committing mortal sin, but in flying from all that could lead to it, and endeavoring to shun venial sin. Oh, then it is that God does great things in the soul! He will then penetrate to the very depths of our heart, nothing will be able to stop His course. He will there seize upon all our desires, and there He will long abide. The soul then becomes subjected by new and inconceivable sensations; she no longer reasons, but she says

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to Jesus: 'Take all. Reign over all, and we shall forever love reciprocally. I will be Thy servant for all eternity!'

"Oh, what a consoling thought that Jesus comes into us according to our purity! Did He come according to our good works, how terrible it would be, for what are man's virtues before His divine sanctity! But you are pure, at least you are endeavoring to be so, and that is enough. Jesus will, then, visit you to bring you happiness."

There are some souls who are always trembling with fear. "They," says Père Eymard, "know not what Holy Communion is. They should forget their own miseries, forget the infinite distance that separates them from God, and remember only *their own great needs*. The Lord Himself is calling them. It is that we may approach Him fearlessly that He hides His sanctity, His Power, and shows only His infinite goodness. Again, remember that the grace of preparation for Holy Communion is one of confidence and not of self-examination, no, not even of prayer. The best preparation is to found one's confidence in these words: 'Come, for I am the God of thy heart!' Such confidence is infinitely more agreeable to Jesus than if you fell prostrate on the earth in despair. And if, after having communicated, you generally find yourself without sensible devotion, it is because you do not meditate on the goodness of God. We are too apt to fancy that He comes to us to reproach us with our faults. No, that is not so. A friend does not visit us to make reproaches, above all, he does not begin at once to do so. Allow Jesus to rejoice your heart. Listen to His sweet words, the expression of His

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bounty and love. After that, a simple glance upon yourself will be more effectual in humbling you than all the efforts you could make to that end. Jesus is in Holy Communion full of love and goodness. He is nothing but love and goodness for us. But the jealous demon tries to prevent us from enjoying His sweetness. No, no, banish all fear, and open your heart to Jesus.

“The most solemn moment of the Christian life is that of thanksgiving after Holy Communion. Then you have at your command the King, your Saviour, ready to gratify all your desires. Ask, ask much! Jesus is your treasure. Make, then, good use of that talent the Heavenly Father has entrusted to you. He is all yours. Make good use of the chance that you then have.”

We shall conclude with a consoling thought. Some would, indeed, be glad to communicate, but they have no special intention, they do not experience any particular need, they fear abusing the Sacrament, and they postpone receiving till a more solemn occasion, a more pressing need. “Oh!” exclaims Père Eymard, *“receive Holy Communion for Jesus Christ’s sake, if not for your own!”* Communicate for Jesus Christ. By so doing, you will console Him for the neglect He receives from so many; you will tell Him that not in vain did He institute the Most Blessed Sacrament as nourishment for our soul; and you will also render fruitful the treasures that He has shut up in this Divine Sacrament. To abstain from communicating when one can do so, and when Jesus Himself permits it by the lips of His priest, is simply frustrating one of the most ardent desires of His Sacred Heart.

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That good Father knew us all, saw us all when in the Cenacle He gave us His testament of love. For every one of us, He portioned out an inheritance. He counted our Communion and charged the angels to bear to us the Hosts which, by His love and almighty power, He consecrated for us at the Last Supper. Do not refuse these Hosts! Do not despise that sublime commission of the Cenacle! Let Jesus Christ produce abundant fruits for your own salvation and that of the whole world!"

Behold how the Servant of God endeavored to increase and ennoble the piety of Christians! Behold how the Most Blessed Sacrament reigns and will always reign over the whole world!

The members of the Eucharistic League should comprehend the honor that Our Lord has conferred upon them, the mission that He has confided to them. It is by this union of heart, by this testimony of their faith and fidelity, that the God of our altars will be King, not only in name, but in very deed. *Adveniat regnum tuum!*—Let Thy Kingdom of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar come to us, O Lord Jesus!

## VIII

### "ABIDE IN MY LOVE."

“**I** WANT to become a saint for the glory of my Master! and I know that it will cost me much!”

“I will do good without glorying in it, without support, without special attraction, without freedom of action, without success,—and all that without any one’s knowing it. By suffering alone, I shall serve the Lord.”

This was the resolution that Père Eymard took at the beginning of the year 1863, and the Lord abundantly blessed his work. His ambition was to see established on a firm footing the little Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament already approved by the Church. To this he dedicated his life and all his future work. “Every branch that springs from the trunk of Holy Church,” he wrote, “grows and flourishes. To remain, as it were, merely by the side of the Church, of the trunk, without being incorporated with it, is to condemn it to death.” His great love for Holy Church made him write in his Rules the following most expressive words: “Our Religious should profess the most absolute devotedness and the most entire submission toward the Holy Apostolic See, upholding its primacy, its rights, its privileges, embracing its doctrines, its sentiments, its good pleasure as the cause and the glory of Jesus Christ Himself. They shall eagerly and joyously hasten to obey the first call or desire of the Sovereign Pontiff,

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as they would the voice of Our Lord Jesus Christ whose place he holds. The first Adoration of the morning shall be daily offered for the intention of the reigning Pope, and the second for the Ordinary of the diocese."

What was the Venerable Founder's joy when, on May 8, 1863, the Holy Father, after having the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament, its Rules, Constitutions, object, and results examined by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, approved and solemnly confirmed it! The Decree of Approbation, signed by Pius IX himself, was in less than a month, June 8, 1863, placed in his hands at the hour of the first Vespers of Corpus Christi.

"At last, at last," he cried in a transport of joy, "we belong to the family, we make one with the family of Holy Church! The Pope is our first Superior. We have become his children, and the ecclesiastical approbation has placed the Congregation under his paternal protection. To be approved by the Pope, and by such a Pope, by Pius IX,—the Pope of the Immaculate Conception—he who has done so much for the Church—what a grace! what an honor for us!"

What encouragement was this for the Founder in his spiritual undertakings! New members were continually added to the little Congregation, and seven new Cenacles were opened in the next few years, to the joy and consolation of him who had worked so sedulously for this result.

On his return from Rome, the Founder desired to call into independent existence another branch of his work, another religious family, which he had instituted to continue before the Most Blessed Sacrament



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the life that the Blessed Virgin had led in the Cenacle. Mgr. Angebault, Bishop of Angers, of regretted memory, consented to become the spiritual Director of these new Religious, who received the title of *Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament*. Their name explains their object. Through love they serve the Eucharistic King, spreading the Kingdom of God by prayer and immolation at His feet.

As for the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, so for these religious women, their only means of honoring Jesus is humility, and self-annihilation. According to Père Eymard's spirit and views, there could be none other. The Rule that he drew up for them may all be resumed in these few words: "*Glorify God and abase self.*"

One day in an instruction, Père Eymard allowed these words to escape his lips: "Is it possible, O my God, that the first church that contained the Most Blessed Sacrament should remain under the power of the infidels! That venerable sanctuary in which Jesus manifested the infinite love of His Heart, which was witness to the parting of Jesus from His Apostles, in which they listened to His last words, and in which after His Ascension, the Holy Ghost descended upon them—should Mahomet reign therein?—Oh! who will give me to redeem that Cenacle—that Jesus Christ may again take up His abode in it! If ever that day comes, I will go through Europe, staff in hand, begging funds to raise a magnificent basilica over that Cenacle, that room of the Last Supper!"

To expose the Most Blessed Sacrament in the hall of the Last Supper! Catholic thought, sublime thought of a heart that hesitates at nothing when there is ques-

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tion of honoring the Divine Master! Yes, the day will come when the Lord will return into His own house. It will be a day of triumph for the Blessed Sacrament, a day of grace and joy for Holy Church!

In 1865, Père Eymard went again to Rome on important business. The faith and piety of the Romans toward the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin were most pleasing to him. He used to call Rome the *City of the Blessed Sacrament*. Here the Lord inspired him to make a month's Retreat. Alone with God, he examined his most secret thoughts, and inquired as to what he had still to sacrifice to Him. No exercise could possibly be more useful to a soul desirous of belonging wholly to its Creator.

During this Retreat, the Father conceived the wish of belonging even more entirely to God, and he took the resolution to ask at each one of his actions, "What is there in this action, or in this thought for God or for my soul? I see that I have often worked for the exterior glory of God. My activity has been for outside things, but lax for those within."

Our Lord tried him by withdrawing all sensible consolation, and he complained lovingly: "I who am generally so sensitive, who can weep so easily,—I find myself cold, dry, insensible. Behold what the Lord demands of me. He desires that I give myself entirely to Him, that I sacrifice myself to Him—*non tua volo, sed te!* He makes me understand that, by an act, a personal act of humility or poverty, I honor Him more than by all the acts of virtue I could obtain for Him from others. *This last is external work, the first is in my own soul.*"

Again, he returns to the same idea: "One act of

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self-abnegation honors Our Lord more than all the conversions effected by the good done in a congregation. This is a fundamental truth upon which we should build."

Among the causes which lead men to neglect exterior works of courageous devotedness and also those of self-abnegation, is, according to the holy Founder, the spirit of levity.

"Levity of mind," he says, "which is especially attracted by everything that can appeal to the imagination and to whatever can incite its curiosity, never descends to the practice of truth by the abandonment of self. Like Pilate, I ask: 'What is truth?'—And I shun the answer, my light mind taking fright.

"Levity of heart, which follows the mere sentiment of the moment, permits itself to be enslaved by every passing impression. It seeks for tranquillity and whatever is agreeable, instead of pausing at the love of truth, whether pleasing or not.

"Levity of the will, which outwardly exhibits much energy, while inwardly it is weak and tepid. In nothing does it consider the will of God."

At the sight of all this, Père Eymard's heart was torn with grief. But God continued to try him by withdrawing from him all sensible consolation. In the midst of his darkness, he complains lovingly: "I who am generally so easily touched, so ready to recognize favors, so full of tears! Behold me now dry and indifferent!" Then rising above this trial, he says: "I understand, O my God, that I do not deserve to shed tears of love, nor even tears of regret. That would be too much goodness on Thy part! An arid sorrow—that is the portion of a heart that has loved itself too much."

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This thought afflicted the loving heart of Père Eymard, and he said to himself: "I shall try to understand what that love of Our Lord is that has borne with me so long and patiently. When my self-love is crushed by so much goodness, perhaps the ice will melt."

Some days later he wrote in his diary: "At last, I see my way! It is by perfect mortification, both interior and exterior, that I shall reach God. By this, like Saint Paul, I shall 'fill up what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ: *Adimpleo ea quæ desunt passionum Christi*' (*Coloss. I. 24*). This is the death-blow from which nature shrinks. I shall treat my senses *fortiter et imperative*, with the severity of a master, as they act toward a slave who is always ready to throw off the yoke. The senses have need of an inexorable master who will grant them nothing.

"The body must be held in check. It hears reasoning, but does not profit by it. It is an animal full of vices. It has to be chained that it may not wallow in the mire. Life without mortification is a real heresy that kills the life of the soul. Souls must be treated with gentleness, some say, but they deceive themselves. True love is a love that crucifies. That love which does not lead to sacrifice is only disguised egotism. I shall treat my soul *patienter*, with patience. The mind is light and ignorant. It must be led like a child, not roughly, but gently brought back to God. I must humble myself more and more at having so miserable a spirit incapable of resting for any length of time in the things of God.

"As to my heart—*abneganter*,—the way of sacrifice! The heart is strong, it is the principal organ of man.

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He would be very glad to sojourn among creatures. But he must free himself from his idols and, restored to liberty, cast himself at the feet of Our Lord, for he has need of a resting-place: '*Fecisti nos ad Te, Deus!* Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God!' If we wish to divide the heart between God and the creatures, it is certain that God will get the smaller share. Take, then, my whole heart, O my God, for after all it is not so very large!"

The moment Père Eymard ceased to live in self, he began to live in God; for, as he said, one must live either for self or God. It is by abandoning self that we reach God. God and self do not balance each other. Besides, what other means have we to struggle against self?

"In every struggle there must be two parties. If Jesus is not in me, who will help me to overcome the 'old man'? All my aim must be to make Jesus live in me, to nourish him that He may grow in me!"

Our Lord attracted him so forcibly that everything outside of Him bored him to death. The following note was found among his papers: "A wretched, wretched day! All spent in visits and letter-writing! My soul is dried up. I feel that an ounce of quiet recollection is worth more than a hundred weight of exterior work." Another time under similar circumstances, he found time to write only this one word—"*Cattivo!*" (Bad).

Meditating on the mystery of the Incarnation, Père Eymard admired the Blessed Virgin entirely united with her Divine Fruit, praising His infinite goodness, and honoring His perfect humility. "Behold," he exclaimed, "the life upon which Our Lord wishes me to

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enter, that is to form Jesus in myself, to make Him live in me, *He* who will henceforth be my strength, my counsel, and my life! Cost what it may, it is to this I must attain, for all else is nothing."

"My own heart when alone is unhappy," said he, "what suffering! The Sacred Heart of Jesus should be my element as is the ocean for the fish, the air for the bird. Without that Divine Heart, I die, or rather I am in agony!"

"The way to love Our Lord *is to love Him*," says Saint Francis de Sales. And Père Eymard writes: "The way to unite ourselves with Jesus *is to be united*. Of what use are subtle investigations, abstruse reasonings? The simple thing is to give one's self over to Our Lord and follow His inspirations. This is the secret of His words: '*Abide in My love*' (John XV, 9).

"When Jesus, my Master, has not been with me, when I have been absorbed in my work, or in that of others, what have I done? Nothing, or less than nothing. I have spoiled all. I must, then, be united with Jesus as His own human nature was united to His Divine Person. It is on this condition that the Christian becomes another Jesus Christ. The law of this life of union, this total dependence on Jesus Christ is: '*Nothing for me, nothing by me.*' Hence, I can no longer receive anything, neither honor, nor affection, nor anything whatever; for to be honored, to be loved, to possess, it is necessary to be some one, and I am only an object ready to be employed according to the will of God! Oh! how could I for so long a time neglect so powerful a means! What merit I have lost! What useless labors, what fruitless graces! By union

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with Jesus Christ, all my actions, all my sufferings would have acquired inappreciable value. Jesus would have labored and suffered in me, and His Eternal Father would have cast a look of tenderness on His Well-Beloved Son in me."

But it cost him to remain under the hand of the Lord. Nature bore the yoke painfully, for continual victory over self was necessary. Nevertheless, nothing, daunted, the good servant exclaimed resolutely: "I shall offer myself to the Lord as often as I breathe."

But for that, strength was needed, and so he prayed: "Grant me, O my God, the gift of strength! That will be sufficient for me in the struggle that I undertake for love of Thee! I want to be neither honest nor virtuous for myself, nor learned nor eloquent. I ask for only one thing—the strength to serve Thee, the strength that proceeds from and is nourished by Thy love, by that pure love which Jesus possessed at the moment of His Incarnation, and which immolated the Humanity of the Son of Mary in the Divinity of the Son of God."

This Retreat ended by Père Eymard's offering the following bouquet to Our Lord:

"Lord Jesus, I consecrate myself to Thee forever!"

"I have made the offering of myself," said he, "and I have sworn to it before the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Communion. I must be a servant who remains always near his Master, who is always at His disposal, responding to all His desires, and that with so much the more satisfaction as it is more pleasing to the Divine Master."



## IX

### THE VIRTUES OF VENERABLE PÈRE EYMARD. HIS HEROIC FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

PÈRE EYMARD possessed in the highest degree the virtue of faith. He unhesitatingly accepted all revealed truths and doctrines. In every event of his life, he sought and found some occasion to testify his ardent faith; for instance, the fact of his having been born in the bosom of a Catholic family. In the same spirit, the 5th of February, the anniversary of his Baptism, was always held in honor by him, also the anniversaries of his receiving the Orders preparatory to the priesthood. But above all, that of his sacerdotal ordination was especially dear to him. They were all feastdays for him, days on which his heart filled with faith, overflowed with gratitude to God. He never visited his native place, La Mure, without making there three stations, as he called them: one to the Baptismal font of the church, one to the Holy Table, and the third to his parents' tomb.

His faith was proof against all trials. At the very beginning of his Institute, his one and only companion left him, and he remained alone for the next twenty-four hours. Then, nothing discouraged, he went to the chapel in surplice and stole, exposed the Most Blessed Sacrament, took place at his *prie-Dieu*, and addressed Our Lord in these beautiful words, which make known his heroic faith: "*Thou art in Thy place, upon the throne of Thy Exposition; and I am in mine, at my prie-Dieu. It is for Thee to do the rest.*" Some

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hours after, his companion returned and knelt at his side. If we follow him in his actions, we shall see him everywhere full of enthusiasm in his efforts to convince all hearts of the truth of that real and true Presence, the primary Source of the supernatural life. Faith in the Blessed Sacrament—this was the fundamental thought of his apostolic career.

We think it hardly credible that a simple human heart would dare aim at elevating itself to those sublime spheres in which all is mysterious for man's feeble understanding. But the good Religious held the key to all the mysteries of divine love, and that key was the Blessed Virgin Mary! Oh, yes! Mary was his Mother, his protectress and, if we may so, his intermediary between the Sacred Host and his heart burning with love and faith. How often that faithful servant of Mary set foot on the soil of Laus, of La Salette, and of Fourvière! His love resisted even the chill of death and in his ardent faith, he added another flower to the crown of our heavenly Mother. He gave her officially the sublime title of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, a title of love and confidence, which no age in the past had ever thought of conferring on her. O ye past centuries, humbly bow down before it! and ye centuries to come, offer to God the profound homage of gratitude! In imitation of Père Eymard, go to Jesus through Mary, henceforth known under the title of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, a title bestowed on her by a heart animated by the most lively faith.

Père Eymard possessed the virtue of hope in a heroic degree. He hoped in the promises and merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom he looked for

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eternal happiness and the means to acquire it. A single note from one of his Retreats will clearly set before us this second of the theological virtues as filling his life with joy and trust in Him whom he served.

"I have," he wrote, "two favorite subjects, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Paradise, union with God. I am attached to the personal service of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. It is for Him to foresee all, to direct all and for me to obey Him in all things and to expect everything from Him."

His conformity to the will of God was quite remarkable. "Provided the little bark sail on toward the much-desired port, what matters it that it is tossed by stormy waters?"

This serenity he preserved under every difficulty, because he had his eyes constantly fixed on his polar star, Divine Providence. To a person who met some difficulty in a certain very responsible work, he wrote: "Be quiet. All will come out right. We wish only what God wills. Attach no importance to what may be said for or against. They are men who talk. As for myself, it seems to me that I am indifferent to everything but what the good God wants as to the form and nature of the Work, provided it be the expression of God's will."

A friend felicitating him one day on his power to remain calm and unmoved under all circumstances, he replied: "It is true I do not suffer, or at least I endure without suffering." He had arrived at this degree of indifference by the way of sacrifice, by the renunciation of all esteem or disesteem, approval or disapproval, blame, contempt, or praise. "Behold," he said, "the fundamental rule of my life: the strict

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and constant accomplishment of the will of God contains all that can be called perfect in heaven or on earth. Be, then, without past, without future, but always present in the divine will."

In a letter addressed to the Rev. Père de Cuers, dated April 17, 1859, Père Eymard said that he was going to give two hundred, or even three hundred francs, if he could, to M. Koll, his carpenter, and he added: "I had just come from my Adoration, and I said to Our Lord: 'I am going to send M. Koll to Thy Providence. It is for Thee that he is working. I have a bill of five hundred francs from Père de Cuers. With it I shall pay the first expenses. Understand!' And now, toward two o'clock, when I was about to go out, who should make his appearance but M. Koll! At the same time, a lady called for me at the parlor. She had been sent by the Superioress of the Blind Sisters with the sum of three hundred francs for me. See how Our Father who is in heaven loves His Divine Son and is pleased to be asked to do something for Him!" This trait of Divine Providence shows clearly how lively were his hope and confidence in God. In the time of trial, nothing could discourage him. "Trial," he used to say, "is better than success. The Cross is better than Thabor!"

Although his hope testified to the depth of his faith, yet nothing could equal his charity, of which we shall now try to give an idea. From his tenderest years, Père Eymard understood the things of God, and his soul was wholly turned to Him. He once wrote to Père Tesnière: "Oh! how great was my love for God when I was still very young! How I loved Him! Nothing in the wide world would have induced me

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to offend Him. I imitated all that I read of the saints. One day, when I was about ten years old, I read that Saint Charles Borromeo made reparation to Our Lord with a rope around his neck. I went to the church about noon, thinking no one would be there. I put off my shoes, lit a candle, and made my Act of Reparation. An old devotee saw me. She soon gathered some other gossips—and on my way home, called me ‘*the little fool!*’ From that time, I always passed for a little fool.”

His greatest desire at this period was to receive Holy Communion, and when he had once tasted that sweet union of the soul with God, his ardent longing was for frequent Communion. At thirteen he obtained permission to communicate every eight days, and later he was allowed daily Communion. This was the powerful attraction of his soul, and from it he drew the strength to struggle against the obstacles that opposed his vocation to the priesthood. It was this love for Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother that gave him courage to bid adieu to his family, thus perfectly observing the precept of divine love: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with all thy strength.”

“Nothing is so beautiful as heaven,” he wrote, “nothing more lovable than Jesus! When shall I contemplate the God of Virtues? I see Him, I love Him, I adore Him. He sees and loves me from the height of His throne erected by my hands, and so ardently desired by my heart!”

The vehemence of his love for God led him to do great things for Him. He says: “Once I used to make to God this prayer: *Domine, in Te vivam et pro Te*

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*moriar*; but now I say: *Pro Te vivam!* Yes, I do not want to die. I want to do great things for God before I die. . . ."

The Servant of God possessed the soul of a true apostle. Without preference, without distinction, he gave himself to all. "Provided Jesus Christ be honored," He said, "all else is of little importance." His sweetness, his condescension, his kindness, his simplicity were unlimited. Crowds ran to him, seeking a remedy in their spiritual ills, in their sorrows of heart, in the trials and vexations of life, and all found in him a willing helper and consoler. His fraternal love sprang from his unbounded love for God. He could never see a poor person without offering him an alms. "If, unfortunately, I have no money to give to the needy who come knocking at my door—oh! that is too much for me, I have to run!"

One day Père Eymard, as if led by Divine Providence, met a man whom he knew. "Where are you going, my friend?" "Ah! I am going where I can put an end to my life!" In great surprise, Père Eymard exclaimed: "What, my friend! Have you weighed well the meaning of your words? Have you not tried to pray?" "I have prayed, I have tried everything, but nothing helps me, and so I want to put an end to myself at once." "Listen!" exclaimed Père Eymard. "Make a Novena for the souls in purgatory and promise to come to see me when it is out." The unfortunate man followed this wise counsel. Some time after he suddenly returned to a better frame of mind, and was saved.

The following words which fell from his pen will prove the heroism of the Christian charity that ani-

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mated Père Eymard's Eucharistic heart: On the 1st of August, 1860, he wrote: "He who is strong and powerful in love is equally so in charity." Can any thing be truer than that?

In every period of his life we behold Père Eymard making persevering efforts to acquire the qualities of a good servant of God, as well as the virtues pleasing to Jesus Hostia. Needless to speak of his burning love for this adorable Sacrament. The most ardent desire of his heart was to procure for It adoration and glory. "I was often struck," said a professor of La Seyne, "by his love for the Divine Eucharist. I remember having seen him one day when he thought himself alone in the chapel, kneeling before the tabernacle and lowering the altar card, as if it were veiling from him the Object of his adoration, of his tender and filial affection."

One night in January, 1855, again thinking himself alone in the chapel, he talked aloud to Our Lord in the tabernacle. But there was a listener whose presence he did not suspect. It was a domestic of the College, named Baptiste. Unable to sleep on account of neuralgia, he had come down to the church there to spend some moments with Our Lord. He was a man of very lively faith, and he related the fact some time after the departure of Père Eymard. As Superior of the College of La Seyne-sur-Mer, the Servant of God gave it a very remarkable impulse, and acquired great influence over both parents and pupils. The prosperity of the Institution gave rise to the remark: "It is not astonishing, for it is from the foot of the tabernacle that he governs his House."

The love of the Holy Eucharist was the first princi-



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ple for his own sanctification and that of others. This principle was evidenced by his wonderful intelligence of the Holy Eucharist and of all things appertaining to the supernatural order. "Who is Jesus Christ?" he used to say. "He is God's love for man, humanized, personified in the Incarnation, perpetuated in the Eucharist." This Eucharistic Mystery, which is the soul of the Church, the source of all virtue, is in Itself only love, and It acts only by love. From this the Servant of God concluded that he ought to utilize this immense force by making It the divine inspiration of his whole life, since the Church had confided It to him, and by his vocation he was consecrated to the glorification of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the showing forth of Its efficacy. He resolved, therefore, to make Eucharistic love the foundation of all sanctification and the means of every spiritual labor, of every virtue, of every apostolate.

The Blessed Sacrament was, in truth, the principle and the end of his religious, Eucharistic life: Perpetual Exposition of the Sacred Host, Adoration, the Divine Office, the Holy Mass, Communion, the Apostolate, his whole interior life—all his works referred to this Divine Mystery.

The Eucharist being the supreme Gift of God and consequently, His supreme abasement, Père Eymard sought to realize practically the total donation of self to the divine will. He sanctified himself *by the Eucharist*, and he sanctified himself *for the Eucharist*. This was his only aim. For him sanctity was to be a means of more perfect service. He had become holy in order to approach and live in the companionship of the Holy of Holies.

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Venerable Père Eymard was not only a contemplative. He also possessed the apostolic spirit and his whole life is marked by ardent charity toward his neighbor. He was born an apostle, and that apostolate he exercised under all conditions, in all circumstances. As a child he began his ministry. He used to gather his little comrades, exhort them to piety, prescribe to them a little rule, various prayers, etc. The gentle influence of his virtue attracted his young companions.

As a seminarist he edified his fellow-students by his irreproachable conduct, by the very efficacious preaching of his example. To see him was sufficient to incite to virtue. During his vacations he loved to instruct the country children in the ceremonies of the Church. His fervor touched and edified them.

As a priest and as a religious his greatest study was the salvation of souls. Without choice, without distinction, he gave himself to all, and the good that he did in all classes of society is incalculable. He devoted all to that divine work, his time, his labor, his strength. "Provided Our Lord be glorified," he used to say, "what matters everything else?" Like Saint Francis de Sales, he thought that ten years of life, more or less, were of very small account when there is question of establishing the reign of Jesus Christ in souls.

As the Founder of the Society of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, he saw too plainly the good that would germinate in the Church from a more practical knowledge of the Holy Eucharist, and so he became the herald, the preacher of Eucharistic love. His whole apostolate was spent in teaching and explaining in all

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its phases the grand mystery of divine love and the love of the Eucharistic God not for a few chosen ones, but for all men: "*Venite ad me omnes*—Come ye all to Me." It is not a vague, indeterminate love, but the personal love of God for each soul, the realization of the "*dilexit me*" of Saint Paul.

In his notes are met only these words: "*The love of the Eucharist—Jesus' love in the institution of the Eucharist—in Its perpetuity—in Its universality—in Its mode of being—the goodness and condescension of the Eucharistic veil—love of the obedience, of the abasement, of the annihilation of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.*"

That one word, the *Eucharist*, was incessantly on his tongue, because It was always in his heart. His conviction was that all Eucharistic power consists in Its infinite outpouring of divine love and goodness upon man: "*In finem dilexit eos.*" He believed himself bound by his vocation to preach only that infinite love. What does one see in the Eucharist, if not the overflowing love of a God? When he treated other subjects it was always in view of the goodness God manifests in them, and which he tried to make very clear.

To his Religious he left this fundamental maxim: "*Ut autem anima devota in Jesu Christo solidetur et semper proficiat, de divina ejus veritate et de bonitatis amore enutriatur, ut sic de luce ad amorem et de amore ad virtutes procedat sapienter: nam probatio amoris exhibitio operis*—That the pious soul may be confirmed in Jesus Christ and make continual progress, it should be nourished with His divine truth and the love of His goodness, that it may thus proceed from

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light to love and from love to virtue, for the proof of love is in action." (*Const. Chapter XXVII, 2.*)

Venerable Père Eymard preached the *personal love* with which God regards every one of His creatures made to His own image and likeness. He taught his disciples that they should begin by rousing love in souls, moving them by the consideration of God's infinite goodness, that goodness which shines forth in a thousand admirable details in the life of every man. It is called the *goodness* that creates us, that conserves us, that preserves us, and, greater than all other, the goodness that converts us and restores to us all our lost riches of merit.

This is the *personal love*, in a word the "*dilexit me.*"

And when the soul has seen in her own life the touching, multiplied, repeated, undeniable proofs of God's infinite goodness toward her; when this sight stirs her and fills her with tenderness, then the wise director invariably puts to her this practical question: "*In return for so much love, will you not love? And if you love, will you not abandon sin? Will you not change your life? To Him who gives you everything, and so generously gives Himself, will you not give your whole self by a just return and a necessary consequence?*" Such was his principle, such his line of conduct in the direction of souls, for it is from the heart that conversion, progress, and all perfection flow.

The spiritual exercises which he gave to those that addressed themselves to him, the Retreats he preached,—the sketches of which are in the hands of his Religious,—were based on this plan at once simple and clear. Penetrated with the truth of God's personal love for man, he would have wished to spread every-

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where that grand doctrine so capable of touching man's heart and converting him.

In a Commentary on the *Pater Noster*, paraphrasing these words, *Let Thy kingdom come*, he said: "Give us the grace and the mission of Thy holy love that endowed with Thy mighty power, we may preach, extend, spread everywhere Thy Eucharistic Kingdom, and that it may be given us thereby to fulfil the desire Thou dost express in these words: *I have come to bring fire upon the earth, and what will I but that the whole world be inflamed!* Oh! let us all be the incendiaries of this celestial fire!" Such were his thoughts, such the aspirations of his soul, such his apostolic zeal for the salvation of his fellow-men.

During the last twelve years of his life he consumed himself in preaching the Holy Eucharist, in kindling this divine fire in souls, that they might more easily attain eternal salvation. He lost no opportunity, either by word or pen, his zeal was indefatigable. To one of his penitents, Mme. Tholin, he wrote, March 16, 1858: "Thanks for the good and most welcome news of the triumph of Jesus Eucharistic in Tarare! How I wish that, torch in hand, you could fly like lightning to spread everywhere the fire of Eucharistic love! Seize for it every occasion that the good Master gives you. Life has charm and influence only through the Divine Eucharist."

If the Eucharist is the object of the most tender contemplation, is It not also the active principle *par excellence*, the most fruitful incentive and means of action? It is the Eucharist that makes the apostles, the missionaries, and the martyrs. To preach the Eucharist and Its marvellous efficacy was for Père

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Eymard a real necessity, a consequence of his own ardent love for God; and not only that, but it was the assurance that he was employing the supreme means for effecting good, for forwarding the conversion and sanctification of souls.

In a letter of August 28, 1868, Mme. G——wrote: "His devotion to Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar was always the distinctive note of his piety. At La Seyne they used to say: 'The secret of our Superior's direction of his House, which gets along so wonderfully well, is that he spends hours before the Most Blessed Sacrament.'"

This attraction always growing in intensity, became later on the only aim of his life, the source of his power and, as it were, the seal of his sanctity. The flame that consumed him animated all his actions, shone forth in his words, and gave to his simple discourses eloquence inimitable and truly divine. His hearers were ravished at the depth of his thoughts, touched by the moving accents that escaped from his very heart, and attracted by that indefinable something which men denominate holiness.

And yet he never troubled himself about what the world calls success. He could, like Saint Paul, glory in knowing only Jesus and Jesus Crucified. It was from the very Heart of Our Lord that he drew his knowledge.

In his last Retreat, preached at Marseilles, January, 1868, he surpassed himself, and yet he declared that, in the midst of his multiplied and never ceasing occupations, he had not the time to think over even a few of his subjects. The day of its closing, engrossed by cares even more than usual, he absolutely could not

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prepare himself. When the moment came for him to mount the pulpit, he had time only to kneel before the altar long enough for the *Veni Sancte*. He arose, began his discourse, and was sublime!

We have spoken of his love, his ardent charity for priests, for his friends, for the poor, for the little ones of Christ. Let us now say a word about his charity toward the poor, dear souls in purgatory. To them he extended the most earnest care. He sought to relieve them in their sufferings by every means of mortification, prayer, and the application of Indulgences.

In one of his letters to the Countess d'Andigné, July 10, 1862, he says: "Purgatory rejoices my soul like an immense grace of mercy, because it appears to me as a gift of God's tenderness for us. Be convinced that you satisfy the Heart of Our Lord by praying for the poor souls." Thus did he desire to relieve and deliver the souls in order to afford Our Lord the joy of making them rejoice in heaven with Himself.

He had great faith also in the protection and the power of intercession of the *souls in purgatory*. He often invoked them, confided to them difficult affairs, gained for their relief all the Indulgences possible, made Novenas for their intention, and declared he had frequently experienced their assistance in his difficulties and trials.

He had obtained from Rome the rare privilege of blessing *Crucifixes* to which he could attach all the Indulgences of the *Way of the Cross*. They could be gained *toties quoties*—by the recitation of *five Pater* and *five Ave*, and he said: "I wish a great many priests had this faculty, that they might labor every-



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*where for purgatory.*" He recommended the Reverend Mère Marguerite, the Foundress of the *Servants of the Blessed Sacrament*, "to pray much for the poor souls. Offer," he said, "for their intention your Adorations, your Communions, your exercises of piety, all your actions. They are very powerful over the Heart of Our Lord and you will receive many graces by their intercession. It looks as if Our Lord wishes to indemnify them in this way for retaining them by His justice in that place of expiation."

He frequently proposed to those that came to him in trouble to make a Novena to the holy souls. He did this to a person who found herself without resources. She followed his advice and, the Novena ended, an unexpected sum came into her possession, with which she was enabled to open a store.

We shall conclude this chapter by a few lines on his charity for the sick and his inexhaustible love for the poor. Under the pressure of ill-health himself most of the time, he knew by his own personal experience how to compassionate the sufferings of others. His charity for them was entirely supernatural. While yet very young, he could not see any one suffering without being himself a sharer of their pain. In the Seminary of Grenoble, in order to satisfy his desire of rendering service, the charge of the infirmary was confided to him, and he acquitted himself of it with admirable devotedness.

His charity for the sick increased during the time of his pastoral ministry. As he had some practical knowledge of medicine, he employed it in relieving those that suffered. Rev. Père Mayet says in his notes: "Soon they wanted only him for their physician and

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they had recourse to him on every occasion. This confidence he sometimes felt to be rather embarrassing, but his great and admirable simplicity was always seconded by his prudence."

Later, as a Religious, he showed the same devotedness to his brethren in religion or to those that were visited by sickness.

"On their return from the Crimean war, a regiment of troops quartered at La Seyne was attacked by dysentery. Père Eymard visited them several times a day, lavishing on them his care, and curing many by the herb draughts prepared with his own hands. Charitable in the highest degree, after curing the body he heard the confession of numbers among them whom later he communicated in the college chapel."

In 1865, his sister having fallen seriously ill, the loving brother hastened to her bedside, he himself suffering more than one can say.

In the Constitutions that he gave to his spiritual sons he devoted one whole chapter to the recommendation of this charity for the sick. He desired "that the greatest care should be taken of them, that the local Superior should visit them every day, and to hasten their convalescence he should have them served with special diet in a little refectory apart."

All sufferings, all pains could be brought to him without fear of importuning him. Despite the religious gravity of his bearing, no one feared to approach him, such facility did the inexhaustible goodness of his heart give to intercourse with him. He had always ready some word about God which sank to the depths of the soul, to calm and console sorrows that before appeared impossible to bear.

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What shall we say of his inexhaustible charity toward the poor? His love for them never wearied, and he procured them all the spiritual and corporal help in his power. As a very young child, the love of the poor, the need of helping those in distress, compassion for the suffering, were traits of his generous nature. He could never meet a poor person without giving him alms; and when he had nothing more to give, when he had emptied the drawer into which he himself had put some change, little Julien appropriated all that fell under his hands in his parent's house.

Ordained priest, his charity took a new flight. When Vicar at Chatte he began by fortifying himself with the authorization of his Curé to do all the good in his power. This authorization was for him equivalent to despoiling himself of everything, and that is just what he did. When the young Vicar was named Curé at Monteynard he had only sixty centimes. He was obliged to borrow twenty francs, which his sister was to refund, in order to procure some suitable clothing, and then another sum for his traveling expenses. His dear poor had consumed everything.

The Curé of Monteynard carried his charity still further. He gave away all that he possessed and even the wardrobe of his good sister, whom he had persuaded to come with him. She tells us: "I had to conceal the money necessary for our daily needs, and I was only too happy when he did not discover my little hiding-places."

In the different positions that he filled, the Servant of God could not resist the sight of any misery whatever. He used to retort laughingly when they spoke of making him bursar of the Society of Mary, that

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he had run through his sister's goods and that, if they made him bursar, he would do the same with those of the Society. All his life he did what he had done as a child; when he had no more money, he gave away his clothes. Later, at Paris and Superior of his Congregation, when, touched at his poor appearance, a kind-hearted person sent him some clothing he secretly carried it to his dear poor.

"A person of my acquaintance," writes Père Mayet, "came to see him on some important affair, and she left him profoundly edified by his charity. For over an hour, she was not denied a minute, though in the midst of incessant interruptions."

He knew not how to refuse, and he told on himself: "When I have no more money to give to the poor who knock at the gate, I run away. I can not help it."

"One day," says Père Richard, "the servant of God asked me to accompany him to the *fosse aux lions*—the lions' den. This was the haunt of the most degraded element in Paris. He had been summoned there for a Baptism. When we arrived he was received with insults. But several children to whom he had given First Communion recognized him immediately, and began to run after him, crying: '*Mon Père! Mon Père!*' The parents gazed in surprise but when they found that it was he who had given First Communion to their children their insults changed to veneration."

In this quarter of Paris, where his charity had wrought wonders, the rag-pickers' children used to say: "We never see the police in our quarters. They dare not show themselves there, but we often see the *Bon Père*—the good Father." And indeed, he

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was there held in benediction as the providence of the good God because, not satisfied with procuring for those poor people, as we have seen, the goods of the soul and religious instruction, his touching benevolence found ways and means to succor them in their corporal miseries. The beautiful work of the *First Communion of Adults*, which saved so many souls of children and adults, and with them and by them the parents and the unfortunate of all kinds, was for him an occasion for the exercise of his incomparable charity, for the spiritual alms of religious instruction or of conversion were always followed by material help. The children, and sometimes even the parents, had to be furnished with decent clothing for their First Communion.

Sometimes, when he had to take a cab, he would make the coachman enter the Rectory before starting, saying: "*Come in, my good man, come take a little coffee. It will warm you.*" And so these good men were always on hand when called to the faubourg Saint-Jacques.

The poor were never wanting in the vicinity of Père Eymard's dwelling, and God alone knows the numerous alms that he gave, and where he procured the money for it. Never did Divine Providence, to whom he abandoned himself in all confidence, fail his immense charity.

Words can not tell all the good that he did around him with no personal resources, but knowing how to draw with full hands from the treasury of his confidence in God. On August 1, 1860, he penned this word, which applied so well to himself: "*When a man is great in love, he is great also in charity.*"

## X

### HIS HEROIC PRUDENCE AND MEEKNESS.

**P**RUDENCE, even in a heroic degree, marked the whole life of the Servant of God. While still very young, he reflected on the nothingness of earthly things, and when scarcely four or five years old he had resolved to become a priest. Inspired by this salutary thought, he was seen to shun the companionship of the wicked. It was prudence that sustained and guarded him during the long years of his youth, when he had to surmount the obstacles that prevented his following the way marked out for him by Almighty God. How long and painful the struggle against the will of his earthly father in order to follow that God who was calling him to higher things! But here we see the heroicity of his prudence, for no difficulty could ever discourage him, or dampen his ardor. He recoiled before no obstacle in his efforts to follow the vocation which he felt came direct from God. In the College of La Mure, his native city, he entered in the most humble capacity for the sake of rendering the study of Latin possible for him, and later, for the same end, he served the Almoner of the hospital at Grenoble. Returning home for a short time, he soon after set out for Marseilles, to the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary, with the hope of finding there at one and the same time the religious life, the life of a missionary, and the possibility of making regular studies.

But when, ten months later, sickness forced him to go back to his father's house, there he patiently awaited

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God's hour without faltering and without discouragement. The hope of becoming a priest never abandoned him even amid the greatest embarrassments. "One day when he appeared to be almost dying," Père Mayet tells us, "some one expressed the fear that he would never be able to attain the great end he had in view. Catching the remark, he roused from his half-agony and exclaimed: '*I shall say Holy Mass! I shall say Holy Mass!*'"

On the death of his father, which took place in 1831, when he was twenty years old, he hesitated not a single instant. Rejoicing over the liberty so long desired and so dearly bought, he departed at once for the *Grand Séminaire* of Grenoble.

Again, his prudence shines forth in his resolution to enter upon the life of a Religious. He had prayed long, consulted his director, sought to know God's will in his regard. As soon as it was revealed to him he hesitated not an instant, put off its execution not one day, no, not one hour. In spite of his sister's tears, in spite of all the good that he was doing at the time in the parish of Monteynard, where his parishioners adored him, no consideration could arrest him. "*God is calling me,*" he said. "*To-morrow will be too late.*"

At Belley, at Lyons, at La Seyne his prudence shone forth. At the first named when his Superiors intrusted to him the spiritual directorship of the *Petit Séminaire*; at Lyons, in the organization and admirable development of the Third Order of Mary; and at La Seyne, in the direction of the Marist College. Everywhere his prudence made him avoid the rocks that are met in Works to be begun, to be set on a better basis, or which call for a new and vigorous im-



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pulse. He shunned, also, the rock of success, of influence acquired, of the veneration which follows holiness. With an intention turned always to God and laboring only for him, Père Eymard was indifferent to the testimonies of reverence that surrounded him, and he could truly repeat the beautiful words: "*My soul is never occupied with any one.*"

Not only in managing the affairs of the present moment did Père Eymard exhibit the spirit of prudence; he looked into the future as far as he could and arranged everything as the Holy Spirit gave him to see. The events of his life which offer most striking evidence of his heroic prudence were those that preceded his departure from the Marist Fathers in order to become the Founder of the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Here we clearly see with what purity of intention the Servant of God acted and with what light he examined everything in order to know surely the divine will in an affair so delicate and of importance so grave. For five years he prayed, consulted, sought the opinion of Pius IX on the subject, and that of Père Colin, Founder of the Marists. Both approved his project. God spoke also at Fourvière, in January, 1851, and at La Seyne on April 19, 1853.

When he had obtained the verbal dispensation from his vows from Rev. Père Favre he determined to submit himself to a last trial: he would delay, would go to Paris, where he knew no one, would there make a Retreat. Putting aside the interior attraction that was urging him, in order to remain in entire and holy indifference, he would make known the reasons for and against, and he would hold himself in readiness to re-

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turn to Lyons if the three Bishops who were studying his case decided that he should think no more about it. But if they declared that God willed it, he resolved to act, to devote himself to the new foundation.

In a letter of May 7, 1856, written to Mlle. Guillot, during the Retreat above mentioned, Père Eymard manifests the sentiments that filled his soul and guided him:

"I am still in Retreat, my dear daughter in Our Lord, and there I shall remain until Wednesday, 13th. I am in entire indifference. I have opened my soul to a man of God, learned, experienced, austere, whom I do not know. His words to me were: 'I must pray, reflect, consult. On Wednesday I shall give my answer.' What will that answer be? I do not know. What reassures me is that I have stated simply all that is against me, all that they said to me at Lyons. I have said too much about it to have natural confidence now. God will manifest His will by His organs. If he tells me to give up this idea, I shall be at peace, I shall do what my conscience has told me to do; if, on the contrary, he tells me to go on, I shall do so in the name of holy obedience. . . ."

If supernatural prudence consists in adapting the means to the end we have in view, shall we not recognize in Venerable Père Eymard consummate prudence when, on one side we consider the ardent desire that devoured his soul to realize, as he said, "the beautiful reign of Jesus Christ on earth," and on the other, the Work that he founded, grouping around the Most Blessed Sacrament priests who are to be at one and the same time adorers of the Real Presence and the "incendiaries" of the love of Our Lord in the Divine Eucharist?

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To realize so great a Work, such as he was persuaded God demanded of him, he sacrificed everything without counting the cost: a position acquired by the labor of seventeen years, even his religious life as a Marist, in order to cast himself into the unknown. Without any of the resources necessary for purely human works, relying on Divine Providence alone, he began his establishment, fearing no obstacles, happy in suffering, asking only to be the "*fertilizer of the tree*," with no other ambition than to erect a throne of Exposition to Jesus Sacramental and to become "*the first adorer and the first victim*."

In the drafting of his Constitutions may be seen the eminent prudence of the Servant of God. From the very first he understood that his Congregation should have two lives, the contemplative and the active; for if the Holy Eucharist deserved to be adored, being instituted for all, It ought also to be preached. But to avoid the divisions that might in time arise among his sons on account of this dualism, and also to hold fast to the truth,—for God must first of all be adored: *Querite primum regnum Dei*,—he placed the contemplative life above the active. The former should never be sacrificed to the latter. In this we see the real prudence of the Founder who, not confining his views to the present hour, knew how to look into and safeguard the future.

Again, he desired that his Constitutions should be so organized as to render the duty of Adoration easy, for it is the first of all duties of a Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Everything is to be sacrificed to Adoration. For example, he laid down that his Religious should perform the Office in choir, and this he

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names the *solemn Adoration* of his sons. But he suppressed conventual Masses, daily sung elsewhere, for they would have been an obligation impossible to support long in addition to that of the perpetual and personal service of Adoration.

Actuated by the same motive, since the service of uninterrupted Adoration obliging the adorers to rise at night, in itself entailed very considerable mortification, and made many pause on the threshold of their vocation, Père Eymard desired that his Rule should exact no other mortifications as prescribed or obligatory. He left to the fervor of every member the care of "*Adimplere quæ desunt passionum Christi.*"

Again, we see his remarkable prudence in the Directory he gave to his Religious and to the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament. It is the prudent foresight of a Founder looking into the future, of one who knows in the present how to dictate laws for the guidance of his followers in time to come. They are stamped with the coin of the highest wisdom, they show the man experienced in the ways of God. They unveil his virtue, his faith, his love of the Eucharist, but above all his admirable prudence in the counsels he gives those called to govern, and the means he proposes to avoid the two extremes, weakness and despotism, and to maintain in his Congregations the spirit that should ever animate them. This spirit is the spirit of love for Our Sacramental Lord—which is the family tie among the members, supposing union and devotedness—and the spirit of truth, which suppresses the obstacle of divisions and personal competition. For example, the following is one of his counsels full of wisdom: "*On every occasion, study how to weigh*

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*and measure everything, giving to all words and complaints only the bearing they have before God. Judge them only as God judges them, that is in truth. When listening to any one, consider the bent of his mind, his character, the trouble that is annoying him, the emotions that are agitating him. The question, thus stripped of its human side, will appear in all its simplicity . . . often in its nullity."*

The Servant of God was always remarkable for the wisdom of his government: at Monteynard as Curé, at Belley as Spiritual Director, at Lyons as Provincial and Visitor, at La Seyne as President of the College, at Paris as Founder. Everywhere did his prudence escape the perils of authority. Things went well under a government so wise, so paternal, so full of the Spirit of God, so condescending to human weakness.

M. Haas, Canon of Gap, and the Reverend Père Touche deposed as follows on the subject of Père Eymard:

"It was in 1841 and 1842, and he was Spiritual Director at Belley. He gave directions very merrily and in the style of a general. He would write, for instance, 'We order, we ordain this or that. . . . Signed: From the General's quarters, Père Eymard.'

"*Servite Domino in latitia*, was his device, not controlled by insignificant things, but acting nobly. That was a good lesson for my own imitation when I was military almoner. I used to think of Père Eymard, and I went on courageously and vigorously.

"At Belley he heard the confessions of all the Professors and almost all the pupils.

"When he spoke about the Blessed Sacrament his words were admirable. As a director of souls he was

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perfect; as a theologian, solid. If any one exposed to him a doubt, he never failed to receive its solution.

"Among Professors, jokes a little commonplace sometimes creep in, but Père Eymard never joined in anything of the kind. In the recreations he was cheerfully dignified and cheerful with dignity. He always spoke with propriety. It was the heart that spoke within him, and from his heart nothing vulgar could issue."

The Marist, Père Montfat, says: "As Director of the College of Belley, Rev. Père Eymard was greatly loved by the Professors, and he could do with the pupils just what he wished. When he was removed, his successor was a complete failure. It was Père Eymard's way, very original, to please his pupils. Who can not recall the sound of the drum, which he beat so often to assemble the pupils and proclaim a holiday? Another would have lowered his dignity, compromised his authority, but with him this original manner of acting succeeded admirably. . . ."

When President of the College at La Seyne he soon manifested the rare qualities of government with which he was endowed and the supernatural prudence that guided his steps. In a short time, under his wise direction, that scholastic establishment was transformed. He won all hearts. Masters and pupils worked together, knowing not how to express their admiration for their worthy Superior.

His prudence shines brightly on every page that records the history of the twelve years following the foundation of the Society of the Fathers of the Most Blessed Sacrament. There appear the vast resources of his prudent administration, the various Houses that

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he founded with but a limited number of subjects to second him.

Again must we pronounce his prudence perfect when we study the Servant of God as a director of souls. His principle of direction was this: *"I follow God's grace. I do not go before it. I await God's grace, and then I act."*

Again, he said: *"To wish to go more quickly than the good God is imprudent. It is not we who give grace. What effect can we have on the will, the soul, if God does not act interiorly?"* And, *"You see the defects of those whom you guide. But if by the divine light they do not see them themselves, it is vain for you to point them out to them. Pray, get grace. Take care, it is not man who sanctifies, but the Lord. Do not usurp His place!"*

It was in direction that he showed his superiority, his elevation of spirit, his wise appreciation of the things of the soul, and the gifts he had received from God. The virtue of prudence is the rule and modetratrix of all the others. The good which it does not regulate becomes useless or even dangerous. If you do not make use of it—vain labor! you will never reach your end; but the other rock is not less to be feared, for it conducts not less surely to fatal results.

The holy director endeavored to show the inutility of actions not demanded of the soul by God. It is vain to anticipate the dawn of day, vain to build the city, unless the Lord puts a hand to it. He desired that no burden should ever be imposed on souls which could not be long borne without discouragement. To accept the burden, the suffering imposed, that which God sends, that which social duty demands,—grace is there.



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In his direction Père Eymard made everything easy. Measuring the difficulties of a man of the world in the performance of his duties, he was cautious in what he exacted of him. He used to say: *"Take them according to their conscience (good and upright, of course), but do not demand more of them."*

All consciences have not the same degree of light, that is clear. How wish that a man upon whom society imposes continual obligations, who lives in an atmosphere deeply corrupt or irreligious, should understand the duties of a Christian as do the good souls of our Catholic towns and villages, where the priest is still respected and religion practised? It is very evident that there is a vast difference between the interior light of such people.

He applied the same reasoning to the adults of his Work of First Communion. *"We do not sufficiently take into consideration the early education of the poor children of Paris. It is anti-religion that they learn theoretically and practically sixteen hours in the day. And will the religious instructions which we give them too rapidly and very imperfectly during several days be able to remove or counterbalance the evil?"*

*"As for the passions, they have under their eyes a perpetual and universal scandal, a scandal that men try to justify by naturalism, and that as long as it does not reach the lowest excess, they legitimize."*

*"As for religious authority, every possible means is resorted to in order to render it odious and contemptible."*

*"They will say: But conscience speaks more loudly than that! No, conscience lives by the light that is furnished it. They who, coming to the full light after*

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*having lived in an environment that was not Christian, know the impressions, the obscurity that enveloped them, the prejudices arising from the statements they have to listen to all day long. The mind and the heart end by receiving an impression not easily removed."*

These judicious remarks are those of a man animated by divine prudence. On February 16, 1866, he wrote to Mère Marguerite the following counsels, which show his wisdom as a director:

*" . . . Take hold of the good in everyone, and make use of it for the benefit of the work of the good God. But as for defects, repeated faults, left for personal crucifixion—all that is the fertilizer of the tree. Make use of all, but only for the service of the Master."*

*"All that consoles me is that Our Lord is adored. He remains upon His throne of grace. He honors His Father. He saves souls. Beyond that, what matters the buzzing of the stinging insects, the whistling of the wind, the flies that annoy? All that does not affect Adoration. Be tranquil as to the future of your little Society. It will become great and holy. All that is necessary is that you make every one of your daughters die twice—once for her vocation and once for her perseverance. It is by death that we purchase divine life. . . . Let God act. You know that He has always blessed me beyond my desires, in spite of my immense unworthiness and misery. . . ."*

Exceptional cases put prudence to the test. Among his Religious, the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, there was one endowed with extraordinary gifts. She could read the conscience of others, she had ecstasies, she endured the pain of the stigmata, though

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without visible wounds, she was well versed in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and the various states of prayer; but, on the other side, she was impatient, she did not always display the charity one might expect to see in her.

Père Eymard directed her for many years and at one time looked upon those manifestations as real, as supernatural operations. But he declared that he had never for the direction of his Society made use of what this Religious told him or of her ideas about certain persons. He says: "*I should have thought that I was lowering myself and prevaricating by consulting her about the foundations to be made or the government of the Society. I have never done so.*" (Conversation with Frère Albert, May 7, 1868.)

Preoccupied by the extraordinary state and the contradictions that he saw in this Religious, Père Eymard resolved to take counsel. He consulted Rev. Père Gaultier, who replied that his knowledge fell short of such a contrast. He saw the Rev. Père Bouix, who declared that the devil could produce those marvellous effects of which we have spoken above, but refused to decide the question. Père Eymard did still more. He consulted the Holy Father twice on the matter. On December 10, 1864, he wrote from Rome to Père Leroyer:

"I have spoken a second time to the Holy Father, and he has laid down for me some very wise rules on the subject." This method of the Servant of God in so delicate an affair, whose discernment was so difficult, shows with what prudence he acted in the direction of souls.

He was no less prudent in the correction of what he

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looked upon as an abuse, although freely practised by many Religious. One day, at Angers, being at the convent of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, a Religious came to ask in his presence a permission of the Reverend Mère Marguerite, and fell on her knees before her. Seeing in that custom a kind of infringement upon the rights of Our Lord, something wounding to the spirit of the vocation, he exclaimed indignantly: "*On your knees! And for what? Do we do that? What! you are stealing from Our Lord the only posture that is proper to those that pray to Him! If this does not cease, you shall never see me here again.*" To touch the honor of his Master was to supplant Our Lord, to make self the end of his Society!

Saint Francis of Assisi pronounced a similar word when he replied to a Brother who infringed holy poverty by asking to keep some books: "Brother, for the sake of your books, I do not want to corrupt the book of the Gospel, according to which we have promised to own nothing in this world."

The prudence of the serpent and the simplicity of the dove found a dwelling-place in the heart of Père Eymard. Duplicity and subterfuge were unknown to him. He spoke and acted with uprightness and sincerity, seeking nothing but the glory of God and his neighbor's good. This simplicity of soul, this rectitude of intention were so well known that all recurred to him in their needs, secure of receiving from him the light and the counsel suggested for their good by his prudence and faith.

We might cite innumerable actions and words, as well as many other events of his life, to prove the herocity of his virtue of prudence; but we think

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we have said sufficient to set it forth in brilliant light.

The Servant of God practised humility too perfectly not to have been remarkable, also, for meekness. "*Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde*—Learn of Me that I am meek and humble of heart." This word of the Master may in a measure be applied to the disciple. He was sweet toward those that suffered and toward those that acted badly; he met the most vexatious proceedings with gentle silence, his meekness remaining unalterable.

Now, when we consider his natural vivacity, his nervous temperament, his delicate sensibility, the immense difficulties of all kinds against which he had to struggle, we must admire that unalterable self-possession which he knew how to maintain in every conjuncture. "When Père Eymard appears the gayest," said Mère Marguerite, "it is then that he is the most burdened with trials." That was the sign by which she knew it. Again she remarked: "Père Eymard is naturally quick, but to see him, one would say he is meekness and patience personified. I am not afraid to declare that, after the example of Saint Francis de Sales, he became the meekest of men. Every one might importune him, keep him hours listening to things of no importance, even when he was weighed down by business affairs. He never complained, he was always kind, affable, benevolent, full of sweetness. In him meekness was not the result of temperament, but on the contrary, of victory gained, a virtue acquired by long combats. He once said: '*Meekness is suppressed wrath*,' thus revealing his knowledge of the struggles that it cost."

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One day having been ruffled by one who owed him some consideration, he humbled himself interiorly at finding himself still so sensitive and, turning to Our Lord, he took this resolution: "*I will look on the Eucharist. I will eat that Manna, and every morning I will lay in my provision of sweetness for the day.*"

If from humility springs meekness, Père Eymard was meek. "He who knows himself," he used to say, "is meek toward God, meek toward the neighbor, meek toward himself. If the Lord tries him, he knows that he does not deserve anything else. The neighbor contradicting him is but God's instrument. As for himself, he sees his own heart and, without murmuring against his misery, he patiently bears it as the poor man his rags, as the child his weakness, knowing his mother's heart. To become meek, I shall not proceed by reasoning, nor by struggling against my nature, nor even by the spirit of penance or of self-vengeance. All that is too militant, it awakens sentiments contrary to meekness. But I shall behold Jesus meek and His desire that I should be meek. In Jesus all is beautiful, all light, all heart! But, above all, I will regard the Eucharist.

"In Jesus' Heart there is no indignation, no desires of vengeance against His enemies. His Heart is all compassion. He is meek by nature, meek by mission. The child, the sinner fear not Jesus; the poor man, the little one love Jesus. It is a duty to be meek. Am I not the servant of my brethren in God? And after all, of what good is severity, the hard and bitter word? It is for Our Lord *to be the Master!*"

Thus it was that Père Eymard clothed himself with kindness and sweetness. It was the most marked ex-



pression of his countenance, *it was the rule of his government*. "Let others," he said, "be fathers; but as for myself, I want to be for you a mother. It is the character of the young to see the wrong and to want to correct it at once. But I wait till Our Lord shows it to the infected one and then I act. Otherwise, it is I who see the evil, and not he who should be delivered from it. Of what good for me to go ahead of grace? Shall I be more skillful than Our Lord, and shall I do what He has not yet willed to do?"

Modesty was the outcome of his humility. The meekness of his soul, which made him so sweet toward all who had any relation with him, gave to his whole personality an air full of what he called "*a modest modesty*."

"A modest modesty," he said to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, "is a sweet, easy, amiable modesty, a modesty that regulates the movements, the gestures, the words, without exaggeration, without stiffness." Such was his own. It was simple and natural, so perfect that it roused no astonishment, attracted no attention. It did not annoy, but it inspired profound respect for him whom it clothed. He walked through the streets without seeing. As some were astonished at his passing an acquaintance without saluting, he replied: "*I never look at people closely enough to distinguish this one or that one.*"

"One day," Père Tesnière tells us, "I was going with Père Eymard to Vaugirard. We were in an omnibus. Mlle. Delmas (the heroine of the hostages of Paris) entered, and took a seat facing Père Eymard. After a little while, seeing that he did not salute her,



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I said '*Mon Père*, this is Mlle. Delmas,' and immediately they saluted and began to chat cordially. 'How was it that you did not recognize her?' I afterward asked. He answered: '*I did not see her. I never look at any one in an omnibus.*'"

"On another occasion," the same informant tells us, "I accompanied Père Eymard to the convent of some Religious. . . . There he took his evening meal, not having time after his instructions at Vaugirard to return to the Faubourg Saint-Jacques. The Superioress and assistants came to the grille, and put themselves to no little trouble to see Père Eymard and his companion. I watched him stealthily, and never for an instant did I see him raise his eyes either to look at the nuns or around their parlor. From all that I learned a great lesson, for ordinarily curiosity is very much tempted about things never before seen, and which may never again be seen."

Modesty was one of the virtues that Père Eymard especially esteemed, and which he practised with great perfection. He said: *Our Lord was modest. His life was modesty itself. The Christians of the early ages regarded this virtue as one of His distinctive characteristics, and Saint Paul could say of Him: 'I conjure you by the modesty of Christ—Per modestiam Christi.'*

"It is particularly dear to Mary. It ought to be the virtue of the servitor of the Eucharist. In the interior, modesty honors my Master by composing my soul at His feet in religious respect. In the exterior, it exercises all the virtues. It is a constant mortification of all the senses. It keeps the tongue meek and charitable, the glances pure, the mouth temperate. It is the

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*easy practice of humility. The way to acquire and to keep it, is to live under the gaze of Jesus present in me."*

Père Eymard possessed in a rare degree this beautiful virtue. From long practice, from long efforts, it had become easy and, as it were, natural to him. His very presence inspired respect and reserve, and the sight of him recalled one to recollection, elevated one to God.

## XI

### HIS HEROIC JUSTICE AND TRUTH.

THE foundation of his Congregation manifests Père Eymard's religion toward God. The cardinal virtue of justice embraces *Religion* and *Penitence*,—what we owe to God as the first principal and the last end, and what we owe to man, a creature fallen and prevaricating. We may fearlessly affirm that the Servant of God practised both of these virtues in an heroic degree.

It suffices to consider his Works, the two Religious Congregations that he founded, whose direct and immediate mission is to give to God the honor, the glory, and the adoration that are His due. Such, in truth, is the unique end proposed by the Servant of God in establishing them. He longed to render to our Sacramental Lord presence for Presence, love for love, to call all Christians to gather around Jesus Eucharistic.

All the saints aimed personally at rendering to God the worship due Him, but Père Eymard brought into existence a Congregation of priests and another of virgins, whose end is *to adore God perpetually* for so many millions of men who never adore Him, or who blaspheme Him; *to give thanks* for God's innumerable benefits, which too often are met by man's ingratitude; *to make reparation* for the numberless sins committed here below; and *to pray*, in order to draw upon the Church and the whole world the benedictions of God.

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It was this thought of God's honor despised that originated those foundations: "*All the mysteries of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin have a religious body to honor them; only the Eucharist has none.*"

In one of the first clauses of his Constitutions (of 1863), Père Eymard had pointed out that *this virtue of religion* should be, as it were, the characteristic note of his Congregation, so greatly did he have at heart the desire to render to God the honor and Adoration that He deserves.

As a consequence of this virtue of religion so deeply rooted in his soul Père Eymard ardently desired to see the prescriptions of the sacred liturgy scrupulously followed. We ought to honor God not according to our personal views, but in the manner in which He Himself wishes to be honored. Now, it is for Holy Church to lay down laws as to how Almighty God is to be worshipped. Through respect for the Real Presence, Père Eymard prescribed to his Religious to observe in choir the most absolute silence, "*strictissimum silentium.*" He desired that they should be, not only exact in observing all the rubrics of divine worship, but full of zeal to propagate everywhere this love of the liturgy. He wished that their churches should be models to which others would come to learn and to taste the beauties of worship and the Roman liturgy.

In his Constitutions of 1863, in the chapter on *Ritualistic Observance*, he says: ". . . *our Religious should try to observe all the prescriptions of the Ritual, the Decrees, and the sacred observances of the Holy Roman Church. . . . They should apply with the greatest ardor to the study of the liturgy as taught by the Church of Rome, exerting themselves*

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*as much as possible to spread the observance of that liturgy, and to safeguard it against unauthorized or private innovations and practices injurious to divine worship."*

This chapter manifests his thoughts and his love for God's worship. He loves Our Lord too much not to desire to honor Him according to the laws of Holy Church. On February 24, 1866, he wrote from Brussels to Père Cuers: ". . . I have organized the Roman worship with all my strength. Some cried out a little, especially Père ——. But I said to him as to all: We have come for Our Lord, with the liturgical law of Holy Church, and nothing shall make us change. We shall observe the prescriptions of the Ordinary. It is liturgical."

Père Eymard was strictly just toward his neighbor, never wounding his reputation in the slightest way. On this point he exercised extreme vigilance, never permitting in his presence any failures against the charity due to others. When necessary he knew how to defend them, to emphasize their good qualities instead of their failings, excusing the intention when the action was blameworthy. He wished all workmen employed in his house to be liberally paid, and that debts to tradesmen should be promptly discharged. When making purchases he always thought the dealers sold too cheap. He wondered how the object could be bought for so low a price, saying that the storekeeper would never be able to make his bread if he sold at prices so reduced.

The Servant of God was full of gratitude, testifying it at all times to the benefactors of his Works and his Congregation. He believed himself indebted

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to them for their liberality to the cause of divine worship or to his religious family. He knew not what means to take to express his sentiments, and he wished his sons to pray frequently for them. "*I would give my shoes,*" he said one day, "*to show my gratitude.*"

The principle of Père Eymard's renunciation lay in this: rendering to God the honor due Him as first Principle and Sovereign Lord of all things, he endeavored also to repair by mortification the honor of which sin robbed Him.

We shall speak in another chapter of his virtue of temperance, of his corporal mortification; but here we shall say a word of his interior mortification, of his spirit of personal renunciation. He desired to make renunciation the fundamental virtue of his Religious, not as a principle, but as a practical consequence of the principle of love.

In consideration of the Eucharist, which conveys to all Christians the proof of God's personal love for every one of them, he thought only one answer could be given, and that is, to love Our Lord. Love ought to be the basis of the Eucharistic life. But the love that does not wish to begin and to end only in vain words is nothing else than the "*abneget semetipsum*" of Our Lord, the renunciation that He exacts from all who aim at following Him.

As we have said elsewhere, Père Eymard resumed this truth in one word, when demanding of his Religious to live "*Absque sui proprio.*" But love should be the determining motive of this renunciation. He did not value virtue for itself, but only as a means for the better service of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He applied in the supernatural life the principle which

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the mother applies every day in the natural life. She loves her children and devotes herself for them. Such ought to be our love for God.

In exacting renunciation as the dominant and fundamental virtue of his Religious, he wished to assure among them a love which gives constant proofs of its existence, a love which forgets self, which is humble and true: "*Non diligamus verbo, neque lingua, sed opere et veritate.*"

Before teaching this doctrine of renunciation to others the Servant of God practised it himself. At the very commencement of his religious career, he wrote in his book of personal Retreats: "Fruit of my Retreat, December 21, 1841. The thought of renunciation has strongly impressed me, the renunciation of all support, always showing equality of humor, holily gay, calm, shunning in the exterior the exhibition of sensible emotion, of any strong impression, uttering my sentiments quietly, speaking out clearly but never deciding, giving my opinion naturally when it is called for. I feel that Jesus Christ wishes from me a daily victory over *antipathy*, never speaking, never reasoning, but accusing and condemning myself. I must unite, however, meekness with holy liberty, founded on the present will of God, *in ædificationem et non in destructionem*. . . ."

In his annual Retreat of 1845, he again wrote: "The good God is urging me toward the love of a hidden life, to shun making acquaintances, visits, a ministry too much in contact with people of the world, also to say Mass in some private chapel without a crowd. . . . The great virtue the good Master exacts of me is abnegation of my own will, leaving everything im-



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mediately and gaily and with holy liberty, when duty calls me elsewhere or occupies me in something else, receiving visits with equality of humor as if I had nothing else to do. This is for me the commandment of religious obedience. . . .”

On the feast of Corpus Christi of the same year, the good God touched his soul, inspiring him with a still more pronounced attraction for the Holy Eucharist. This was the starting-point, but to reach the goal, the foundation of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament eleven years later, how many renunciations had to be made! Our Lord was then preparing him for them, disposing him to wish only the realization of the Divine Will.

We shall now touch on his gift of self. In his Retreat at Nemours, November, 1866, he wrote: “The most beautiful gift that love can make to God, is *the gift of one’s personality, of one’s ego*, thus realizing the *Vivo, jam non ego*. Doubtless, we give ourselves to God by the vows of religion. By *virginity*, we consecrate ourselves to an immortal God, to whom we shall be united in this world and in the next. No alliance can equal that. The vow of *obedience* puts us on the road to sacrifice, but *we have chosen it*. By obeying, we control our personality. We do so in order to acquire more surely the eternal recompense. The vow of *poverty* frees us from perishable goods, that we may acquire eternal riches. It is a bargain, a speculation entirely to our own advantage.

“But to give one’s personality, to love God for Himself, without desiring nor being sustained by the hope of recompense in Paradise,—here is the most perfect gift of love. One thereby becomes, as it were,

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a *minor*, unable to receive, unable to possess. For this, one must be able to say: 'Give to Our Lord, I am no more, I no longer exist, I am only a fraction.'—A spouse adorns herself for her husband, she tries to please him. In a much more elevated order, the soul ought to do the same for Our Lord."

"One must give to God one's personality, love God for God and not for self, becoming nothing more than a shadow without name, without propriety, in order that Our Lord may continue in us His Incarnation. . . ."

During his great Retreat at Rome, on March 21, 1865, the feast of Saint Benedict, Père Eymard made to Our Lord the vow of personality.

"I have made," he writes, "the perpetual vow of my personality to Our Lord Jesus Christ through the hands of the Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph, under the patronage of Saint Benedict. *Nothing for me, and nothing by me.*"

He desired that the mystery of the Incarnation should be the model of the vow of personality. As the human nature in Our Lord acts only by the movement of the Person of the Word and only for Him, so did he wish to act only by and for God. And this is the grace of Holy Communion: "*Sicut misit me vivens Pater et ego vivo propter Patrem, et qui manducat me, vivet propter me.*" "*Vivo, jam non ego; vivit vero in me Christus.*" He adds: "This vow ought to be the greatest, the holiest of all vows, since it is the vow of *self*, of the *ego*, and of the *ego* free always to give itself again. . . ." It is, indeed, the crowning vow of all the other vows of religion, whose practice it elevates to an heroic degree. Père Eymard

defines it: "The perfect renunciation of the human *ego* practised through the motive of the perfect love of God."

In one of his earliest drafts of the Constitutions, the Servant of God formulated this vow, which he called *The Eucharistic Vow*:

1. "*Ad divinum Adorationis officium sibi a Superiore determinatum et præscriptum, voto Eucharistico se adstrictos esse gaudeant omnes; et hoc regium amoris votum ut aliorum votorum et totius suæ vitæ gloriam et finem habeant, dicente Domino Jesus: QUI MANDUCAT ME, ET IPSE VIVET PROPTER ME.*"

2. "*In Eucharistico Domini Nostri Jesu Christi servitio perfectiora semper æmulentur et digniora, ut supremo honore et summa devotione Regi regum serviatur.*"

To the Father whom he had named Master of Novices, he wrote, March 5, 1866: ". . . Yes, dear Father, without mortification, there are no religious men possible, none true. All that rose-water piety, those sentiments of joy and happiness are like outings in fine vehicles. I have no faith, no confidence in them. We must above all, make men of virtue, that is, men of sacrifice. After all, it was Our Lord Himself who laid the foundation of evangelical perfection: *abneget semetipsum*. Whoever loves his liberty, his ease, his precious health, his little privileges . . . loves not the *abneget*—he loves *self*. . . ."

"God has permitted us to have had in the above point experiences rather keen, and we must not repeat them. Every man that can not be educated up to this virtue of personal abnegation, must be tried by degrees, and at last sent away. . . ."

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From Gand, he wrote again, April 14, 1866: “. . . Ah! *the personal*—behold the great enemy to be hunted down and chased away—in heaven, the proud angel; in the Church, heresiarchs; in the religious life, egoists. Behold the cry of death and of life, which must be incessantly repeated: *Si quis vult post me venire abneget semetipsum*; the *Sine sui proprio*; the *Oportet autem illum crescere, me autem minui*.—Courage, dear Father! In this struggle, you have learned and gained much. It was good to see you at work and God also with you. . . .”

On January 18, 1868, he wrote to the same Father: “Ah! dear Father, God has shown you all the secret of the religious life and even of the Christian life in this thought: *The first duty, sovereign mortification*. All consists in that. It is the root of the tree, the sap of the virtues and of the true love of God. Without this mortification, there is only self-love domineering and spoiling everything. Ah! hold to that above all, in everything, and in spite of everything. God loves you. He has shown you the right path, the *Abneget semetipsum*—the *Semper mortificationem Christi in corpore nostro circumferent*—the *life by death*. Yes, you must convince your novices of this first law and make them practise the Rules to the letter in what is laid down. . . .”

Lastly, on June 20, 1868, five weeks before his death, Père Eymard, reverting to this same thought, again wrote to the Reverend Master of Novices:

“. . . Assuredly, it is a first principle: Without mortification, no virtue; without the spirit of mortification, no possible progress. *We advance in the spiritual life only by death*. You have indeed, been inspired,

dear Father. Second the inspiration. Oh! how happy you are! I envy your grace of being far removed and out of the world! . . ."

The Servant of God was scrupulously faithful to truth. His nature, the loyalty and nobility of his character would have arrested on his lips any lie or dissimulation. But a still more elevated motive made him regard the practice of truth as an absolute duty, being by his religious and Eucharistic vocation the servant of Him who called Himself "The Truth," *Ego sum Veritas*. Still more, he had so well comprehended the social importance of this virtue that he made it one of the fundamental principles of his Congregation. "*Veritas testes fideles ac discipulos concordiales in omnibus se præbeant: est enim Jesus rex veritatis pro qua decertare debent milites ejus ut digni sint Capite suo.*" (Const., 1 p., cap. XII n. 4.)

He wishes that the liar should be expelled without mercy from his Congregation. It costs to tell the truth. Saint John the Baptist, Our Lord, the martyrs knew that, but an upright soul owes it as much to himself as to others. The "*est, est,*" the "*non, non*" of Our Lord, he knew how to practise faithfully. One of his friends, the Abbé R——, said of him: "His uprightness was such that it would have been like a blasphemy if even the appearance of suspicion had ever been cast on his probity."

In 1863, he went to Rome to obtain the approbation of his Congregation. The Decree was about to be signed, when a miserable calumny set on foot against him, brought his affairs to a standstill. The Venerable Founder holily irritated, went to see the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation. He declared to him that the

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accusation was a pure calumny, and demanded an investigation. But his words, his protest were marked by such an accent of truth that the Secretary very readily believed what he said was true. "That will do," he said. "To-morrow I shall see the Holy Father and tell him the whole truth." Some days later, Père Eymard received the Decree of Approbation.

In 1865, when he was founding a House of Adoration in the Cenacle, or at least in Jerusalem, calumny again followed him and he was again accused. We give his answer to the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda: "The dignity or the importance of those that impute such things to us may without doubt bear some appearance of truth. Nevertheless, I was accused without knowing it. Although secrecy surrounds your grave deliberations, Monseigneur, the examination calls for discussion. Now, with the holy Gospel which says *est, est; non, non*, I affirm absolutely and without equivocation that the charges are all false, that we have no Religious woman, nor any person helping or connected with our proposed Work in Jerusalem." . . . (*Letter of May 8, 1865.*)

We can unhesitatingly affirm that the Servant of God never told a single falsehood in his whole life. He was simply incapable of such a thing. In this spirit of uprightness, which was one of the attractions of his noble character, he wished that no foundation should be made without the good-will of the Ordinary of the place, and that the Fathers should explain simply the end of the Institute. "*Let them abstain from resorting to patronage or other worldly means to obtain this consent, rather preferring to*

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*abandon such foundations which, vitiated in their origin, would not be blessed by God."* (I p. Constit., cap. XXXI, n. 1.)

It is not surprising that such a character, so upright and truthful, should give itself generously to every prescription of obedience. The Servant of God was a man of obedience. He always practised that great virtue in its perfection. He lost his mother at the age of seventeen and his father three years later. His sister, who watched over him while a seminarian and remained with him until his entrance among the Marists, could recall in his childhood only two very trifling faults against obedience, and they were, indeed, the exceptions that prove the rule. They show how his upright soul knew how to follow the straight road of obedience. During his stay at the *Grand Séminaire*, his conduct was ever irreproachable. He was for his fellow-students a model for imitation, one whose very appearance raised their hearts to God.

This virtue of obedience, which he had so perfectly practised in his childhood, at the *Grand Séminaire*, and during the five years of his parochial ministry, developed and shone with new lustre in the religious life. He was the child of his Society. He loved and served it as a child loves and serves its mother.

Scarcely four years after his entrance among the Marists, his Superior General appointed him Provincial, then Visitor, charges which he exercised for several years, and which showed the high esteem in which his zeal and virtue were held. Had he not been in the hand of God while resting in that of his Superiors, such confidence would not have been shown him.



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On December 22, 1849, he wrote to Mlle. Guillot the following words which reveal his spirit of obedience. He was then at Lyons, Visitor-General of the Society of Mary, and Director of the Third Order:

"The Third Order occupies me, rejoices me, consoles me. I would wish to do a thousand times more for the perfection of these good souls, but my motto is: 'Do all by obedience, leave all by obedience, desire nothing out of obedience.' To leave Lyons tomorrow never to return, to see no more those to whom I am entirely devoted in God, to live and die in the corner of a stable or upon the highroad, wishing no word to be spoken of me after my death, to be confounded with paupers—this is what I desire, and I beg you to ask it for me. . . ."

Regarding his obedience toward his Superiors, Père Mayet writes as follows: "At a certain time, he received a letter from a Superior of the Society of Mary, which must have made the writer suffer much, for it notified Père Eymard on the part of the venerable founder of the Marists, of the prohibition *in virtute sanctae obedientiae* to do such and such a thing (1). For one so obedient and for whom a single word would have been sufficient, this was a rude blow. I saw him at this time. He used to tell me everything, but now he said not a word of his trouble. This gave me great edification when I later on learned the whole circumstance. He allowed himself not one word of complaint, but it made him ill."

Here is another circumstance given by Père Mayet,

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(1) Very probably Père Mayet here alludes to the Third Order of Mary of which Père Eymard was the Director. He was ordered to have nothing more to do with it.

which proves clearly what a spirit of obedience animated the Servant of God: "One day Père Eymard received one after the other, two severe letters from the Father General, reproaching him with several things, some of them turning on the subject of erroneous teaching. Père Eymard said to me: *'God be praised! That is good for me, makes me think. I need it. Besides, it is a sign of some great grace that God is going to give me.'* Then he smiled with the air of one a little annoyed. In one of these letters, the writer urged him to lose no time in addressing a letter of apology to the Very Rev. Père Colin. The Servant of God said to me: *"I shall do it to-morrow. I am not afraid to humble myself, to ask pardon and a penance. But it is not for man that I do so, it is for God!"*

The circumstances accompanying this trial were of a nature to fill him with confusion, for they obliged him to take a place below his inferiors. That same day he remarked to a Marist, Père Mulsant: *"God has deigned to shed on me precious favors. I have received a letter that has given me much pain. It will serve to keep me in humility."*

## XII

### HIS HEROIC OBEDIENCE AND FORTITUDE.

WE set forth in the last chapter of this biography the perfect obedience practised all his life by the venerable Servant of God. We shall now say a word of that obedience when directed toward the Supreme Pontiff of the Church, his Bishops, and all who held ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Venerable Père Eymard was too much in love with the Most Blessed Sacrament not to obey, first of all, the Pope, the Vicar of Christ, who instituted the Holy Eucharist; from the Pope, that love flowed to the Bishops of Holy Church, the consecrators of Priests; and then to the Priests, the consecrators of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

On his return from Rome, after having received from Pius IX, January 5, 1859, the Laudatory Brief, he wrote to the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament his unexpected success: "It is Pius IX, that grand and lovable figure of our century, Pius IX, who has suffered so much for the Church, who has laid upon the brow of the Blessed Virgin so beautiful a crown, and conquered to Jesus Christ so many nations—that Pontiff whom future ages will envy us, who has blessed us by giving us our first Laudatory Brief, composed under his own inspiration, signed by his own hand,—also a blessing to the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, contrary to ordinary custom, contrary to all expectations." Again he wrote: "Know that the benediction of the Church gives fecundity and stability."

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His spirit of faith desired no other support than this unique strength here below, for it is the strength of God Himself. His confidence in the future rested on the thought that the Sovereign Pontiff having blessed his Work, it had thereby received life and the pledge of its prosperity. *"When God blesses, it is for eternity, if we do not stay that benediction."* These were his words to the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

On May 8, 1863, he obtained the Canonical Approbation of his Congregation. "How recall," said he, "the signal favor of 1863, when, after seven years of existence and trials, on May 8, the feast of the Apparition of Saint Michael, Archangel, the Holy Father signed our Canonical Approbation, perpetual, without conditions, without patronage, or the mediation of others. . . . To be approved by Pius IX, the Pope of the Immaculate Conception—what a favor, what an honor for us!"

This sentiment of gratitude, this profound respect for the person of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, this spirit of dependence on the Holy See which was, so to speak, the foundation of all his conduct, the inspiration of his decisions, took afterward an affectionate, a filial character, manifested by his deferential attachment to all that emanated from the Holy See.

"The Holy Father," he said, "does not always command. He sometimes says: *'Such is my desire.'* For us this desire is an order."

Again, he said: "Have confidence in the Church. It belongs to the spirit of the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament to hold on to the Holy Father as to one's own vitals, because he is the Father, because

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he is in the bark of Peter. . . . We have the happiness of being attached to this bark of Peter. . . .” And that this spirit should indeed remain that of his Congregation, Père Eymard says in his Rule (*Chapter XXX, n. 1*), which treats of the duties of the Religious toward the Holy See: “Our Religious shall profess the most absolute devotedness and the most entire submission toward the Holy Apostolic See, upholding its primacy, its rights, its privileges, embracing its doctrine, its sentiments, its good pleasure as the cause and the glory of Jesus Christ Himself.” He wished also that the first Adoration of each day should be made for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff, and the second for the Bishop of the diocese.

Père Eymard’s obedience to Bishops was not less sincere. If he openly declared his filial submission to the Pope, a certain kind of independence toward the Bishop must not be falsely concluded. It was the principle of authority that he wanted to see everywhere respected. On March 23, 1861, he wrote to Père de Cuers on the subject of a projected foundation at Lyons for a Work of First Communion: “We must always enter by the gate of authority. That is the royal road of the Eucharist and the *in hoc signo vinces*.”

In the first draft of his Constitutions, written before the foundation, toward the year 1855, in speaking of obedience to their Lordships the Bishops, Père Eymard says: “They shall look upon the Ordinary of the diocese as holding to them the place of father, and shall deport themselves toward him as devoted children that he may love the Society as his own family” (*Chap. XVI, n. 2*).

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At the time of his entering on the religious life he never took a step without the authorization of his Bishop. In a letter of September 3, 1868, the Abbé Joseph Bard confirms this statement. He says: " . . . He very much dreaded the pastoral charge, but he often said to me: 'I shall remain here if my Bishop orders it, and I shall leave only with his permission.' Doubtless Mgr. Philibert was very reluctant to lose a subject so precious, on account of his tender piety, and so commendable by many other considerations. His Lordship would have preferred seeing him become a missionary in his own diocese."

But his obedience in following the call of God was still more striking. Always attentive to consult His designs over him, the young man was equally prompt in following them as soon as made manifest. Filled with this spirit, he quitted the paternal roof in response to the call of God, to study for the priesthood. Later on, it was his sister whom he left in spite of the deep affection that he entertained for her, in spite of the success of his parochial ministry, in order to hearken to the interior voice calling him to the religious life.

God, however, went still farther. He desired a holocaust. After seventeen years passed in the Society of Mary, his only love in this world, He demanded of him its sacrifice in order to make him a Founder.

These great events of his life admirably proclaim his spirit of obedience to the divine will, but above all is it portrayed in the last. Nowhere does this virtue shine more brightly, nowhere is given such evidence as at the time of his severing his connection with the Marist Fathers that his love for the Most Blessed

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Sacrament was urging him, as if in spite of himself, to found a religious Congregation entirely consecrated to the service of the Holy Eucharist.

Several times he had received special favors from Heaven, and the trend of his thoughts constantly urged him on to this new way. January 21, 1851, and April 19, 1853, were memorable dates for him, since on them he had tasted God and received interior lights for the mission He was going to confide to him. He was himself persuaded that to walk in the way which had been shown him would be to accomplish the divine will. But he did not trust his own inspirations and, to avoid erring in an affair so important, he several times consulted the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX, once in June, 1853, and again in August, 1855. He sought to know God's designs most certainly, without possibility of erring, "*In order*," as he said, "*that from the very beginning things should be very clear.*"

The Founder of the Society of Mary, the Very Rev. Père Colin had approved the project. He even wished to realize it at Néglière, one of the Houses of the Society. But his successor, Very Rev. Père Favre, judging from another point of view, and more intent on safeguarding the general interests of his own Congregation than desirous of founding a new one, did not enter into Père Eymard's views, but opposed a formal refusal to his leaving the Marists.

This difference of opinion was for the Servant of God a cruel martyrdom. On the one side, a man of obedience, he desired to build on sure and solid ground; on the other, God was impelling him to action. In the depths of his soul burned the conviction that Our Lord was asking him to devote himself to this



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new Work. In a letter of July 24, 1855, he says: "Pray for me that I may do the *holy will of God, and above all that neither the flesh, nor the spirit, nor this miserable ego* may be a Satan on my way."

One who knew Père Eymard at this period of his life, Mlle. Clappier, writes: "What did he not suffer for his dear foundation! Opposition, struggles, agony, disapproval and, to say the truth, even blame,—all most keenly felt, especially by one of his sensitive nature. *From the very beginning he fought against his attraction.* It was only after having prayed, consulted, made Retreat after Retreat, that, no longer able to doubt Our Lord's will, he decided to take the first steps in the new Work. God willed it. Of this he was convinced. *'The Blessed Virgin has given me to her Son. Can I refuse?'*" he said."

This man of obedience built only upon obedience. After having obtained Père Favre's verbal dispensation from his vows, lest it might look like a consequence of his own insistence, he was not satisfied, but began the affair all over again, *ab ovo*. He made another Retreat at Paris, from the 1st to the 12th of May, 1856. In it he turned away from his interior attraction more strongly than ever, laid open the facts for and against just as they were, forced his soul to perfect indifference, not desiring, as he himself wrote, that his Congregation should have for its starting-point his own interior attraction, but rather that it should be based entirely on the principle of authority, on obedience alone.

On May 13, the response being in the affirmative, he sacrificed everything, and unhesitatingly, courageously began the Work that God wished of him. He

broke the sacred bonds formed by God Himself and which God alone can sever in order to change them into others still more perfect, as we have sometimes seen in the life of the saints. The *common rule*, apart from the privilege the law gives of passing to a more perfect Order, is to adhere to one's vocation with unshaken fidelity, with holy perseverance which yields only to strong evidence of another call. The *sovereign rule* is to rise above everything, even above one's first vocation, at the sole manifestation of God's will.

These two principles are equally certain, one is as clear as the other. The forgetfulness of the first exposes to self-illusion; the forgetfulness of the second leads others to judge unfavorably of him who observes this sovereign rule.

Père Eymard's obedience did not flinch in the face of death. Having been obedient all his life, he was the same at its close. When his end came, he had not a word to say, not a regret. He answered *amen* to the divine will that spoke through it. And yet death struck him somewhat unexpectedly. How many affairs he left unfinished! How many beautiful projects for the glory of his Master had to be abandoned! It seemed that his children and the Work itself still needed him for long years to come. But Our Lord decided otherwise, and the Servant of God bowed assent and died far away from his own, a smile upon his lips in the peace of the Lord, without agony and without regret. He realized the words of Holy Writ: "*Vir obediens loquetur victoriam.*" He knew himself to be a servant of the Eucharist, and he played his rôle of servant to the end.

We shall now speak of his heroic fortitude. He was always remarkable for uncommon strength of soul. As soon as he was certain of the divine will, at once, without counting costs, without weighing obstacles, without allowing himself to be vanquished by difficulties, he put his hand to the work and pursued the enterprise without ever allowing himself to become discouraged. This virtue of fortitude shone through every epoch of his life. First, in his early youth when, faithful to the call of God, he rose above all obstacles to respond to his sacerdotal vocation. Neither the refusal of his father, who steadily opposed his studies, even on his bed of death; nor the humiliations that he had to undergo in acquiring the first rudiments of Latin; nor the ill-health which he endured for eighteen years, and which obliged him to lose over two years when his weakness incapacitated him for any kind of labor—nothing could conquer the energy of his will-power. *"I will be a priest!"* he exclaimed. We remember his beautiful words to his sister when she wished him to defer his departure for even one day: *"No, sister, it is impossible! God is calling me to-day. Let me be faithful to His voice. To-morrow it might be too late."*

This same heroism of will he manifested when quitting the Marist Fathers to plunge into the unknown way pointed out to him by God as Founder of a new religious Congregation. Here shone not only his faith, his noble generosity ready to sacrifice everything, his love of Our Lord which was urging him on to action, but also that supernatural force which could sunder the ties of seventeen years filled with good works and merits, and renounce without a sigh a

future still more fruitful, since the fame of his holiness had already extended his renown and influence. But all that was nothing in his eyes. He was certain that God was calling him elsewhere. Like Samuel, he unhesitatingly replied: "*Ecce ego, Domine, quia vocasti me?*" and cast himself resolutely into the unknown.

Still more clearly was this virtue of fortitude exhibited in the Work of his foundation. Henceforth, in his struggle with difficulties, since he began without resources of any kind, he bravely faced them and, with the help of God, triumphed. The same invincible faith resting on the will of God, animated him in the foundation of his various Houses, and especially in that of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Here shone brightly his faith, his love of God, and his heroic strength of soul. From *nothing*, fructified by divine grace, he raised one of the most beautiful Works of Holy Church. Is not this the highest proof of his virtue? "*A fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos.*—By their fruits ye shall know them."

Nor was it only the overcoming of obstacles, the coping with all kinds of difficulties and contradictions, but the actual suffering that he had to undergo to raise one throne more to Jesus Eucharistic. But such suffering was all joy to him, such sacrifices were sweet. He used to say: "*When I expose Our Lord, I am jubilant!*" But to attain to this joy of exposing Our Lord, by how many difficulties, struggles, labors, fatigues he had to pass! He foresaw all that, but nothing could daunt him. Difficulties ever found him resolute and valiant. He recoiled before no obstacle. The divine object of his desires was dearer to his

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heart than the difficulties in attaining it were painful.

During his first Retreat at Rome, he wrote, on May 17, 1863, the dispositions of his soul: "I am making this Retreat that I may become a saint. For that I feel I must die to all things. I place my confidence in God who, in His goodness, has always spoiled me and granted me what I desired, even in favors of the natural order. This death appears to me in all its sacrifices, and makes me almost fear. *Personal crosses*; suffering without help, without sympathy, always shackled; to effect good without glory, without honor, without success, without protection, without affection, without liberty. . . . I feel that the moment of this death has come. The great *exterior* work of the Society is done" (he had just received from the Holy See the Canonical Approbation of his Society); "the *interior* remains to be accomplished, and that will be more difficult. I must pay in my own person. Every vocation must cost me a death, a death of which no one will know. It is by suffering that I shall serve the Society. . . ."

His virtue of fortitude gave him courage to pursue unrelentingly up to the very eve of his death a continual apostolate.

In spite of his burning thirst to rest at the feet of Our Lord in the sweetness of contemplation, every undertaking of zeal for His glory found him ready for action. Thus it was that in twelve years he raised to Our Lord nine thrones of Exposition apart from the eighteen months of labor spent in endeavoring to recover the Cenacle in Jerusalem. In 1865, at the General Chapter of his Congregation, in spite of his repugnance, he took up once more the burden of the

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Generalate from which he had begged each member of the Chapter to release him. He truly realized Saint Augustine's word: "*Effectus divini amoris est zelus.*"

The virtue of fortitude appears in fidelity to duty. This characteristic was strikingly apparent in the venerable Servant of God. Whatever the duties he had to accomplish, whether those of his youth, or in the Seminary of Grenoble, at Belley, or at La Seyne, whether on missions or in the direction of his Third Order of Mary—he was ever the same, the man of duty, without weakness, without discouragement, always prompt in doing good, in hastening wherever God called him, ready to do what He demanded of him. Such perfection of life, such daily unflagging fidelity surely denote a soul filled with the energy of the saints, a soul meant for great things. He himself used to say: "*The way to do great things for God is to know how to do little things when He asks for them.*"

### XIII

#### HIS HEROIC PATIENCE AND ANGELIC PURITY.

**T**HIS soul so strong in face of duty, was alike unflinching in the time of trials and crosses of all kinds. God had endowed His faithful servant with extraordinary tenacity of purpose, and this led to unalterable peace, perfect calm of soul, which exterior contradictions could never shake. This strength of character he used above all against himself in the unremitting labor at his own perfection. While still a child, he constantly exercised himself in it, making practices of mortification to maintain himself in purity, recollection, and union with God. This aim he pursued during his whole life with admirable perseverance, as we know from the notes of his personal Retreats. It was in this way that he acquired command over himself so complete that he remained undisturbed by opposition, amiable and smiling under humiliation, kind and charitable when attacked by slander, calumny, or detraction.

One day, he said: *"When God predestines a soul for great things, He prepares it by great sufferings."* And he himself knew by experience all kinds of great annoyances and sufferings, both of body and soul, of heart and mind, as well from outside as from his own. But they always found him resigned and submissive, and better still, always happy to offer them to God as a proof of his love for Him. *"When love suffers, it is relieved,"* he would say. He loved to recall Saint John Chrysostom's beautiful answer to the Empress Eu-



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doxia's envoys: *"I fear only sin, because that alone can separate me from God."* In the same spirit, Père Eymard would explain: *"If Our Lord is for us, what matters all the rest?"* And again: *"Give me a Host, and I have need of no one."*

On July 16, 1865, he wrote to the Countess d'Andigné, after his re-election as Superior General: "I acknowledge my weakness. I wanted to flee from crosses and hide myself, thinking thus to be more to God. But the good Master has not willed it. May He be praised! One thing I have learned to know, and that is, that domestic crosses are terrible on account of their proximity and continuity. They are sometimes light, when the bright sunshines dries up their humidity; at others, heavy, when rain falls from Heaven, that is, when sensible abandonment of God is added to them. . . . We must suffer all and in all places. . . . Suffering is the seed of Calvary sown over all the earth. . . . It looks as if Divine Love always enters the heart by a new wound, and that It delights in perforating it that Its heavenly flame may enter through the wounds. Ah, well! Long live the Cross of the good God, and long live the creatures that impose it or who are crucified by it!"

It is not astonishing that a man of such fortitude should be a man of patience. The numerous trials that beset his path found his gaze fixed on God, possessing his own soul, accepting everything because coming from his mighty hand. His sister said of him: "In spite of his great sensitiveness, I do not remember having ever remarked in my brother the least sign of impatience. Sometimes the slight color that rose to his face proclaimed the struggle going on in his soul.

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I always saw him calm and serious, but at the same time affable, and even gay when occasion called for it. . . .”

Père Eymard rose above the impressions of nature, and his union with God, which kept him aloof from human excitement, prevented his losing his habitual equanimity under disturbing influences. So great was his empire over self that he could listen to very hurtful things as if he did not comprehend them. One of his sayings was: *“Let us offer our crosses to God, but hide them from men. Let us guard for Our Lord the virginity of our sufferings.”*

The following letter was written to Mlle. Françoise Matagrín, May 5, 1857. We quote it here as a proof of his spirit of patience.

“Pardon my long silence, especially after the kind offers your piety urges you to make to us. I shall confess to you quite simply, I had not the courage to write. Crosses are multiplying and succeeding one another on our little Calvary, and that in the midst of a thousand embarrassments and occupations which leave me scarcely time to pray, to kneel at the feet of Our Lord.

“In devoting myself to the Eucharistic Work, I knew in the beginning that I was going to Calvary, but the Divine Goodness showed me beyond it so many graces, so much love that I joyfully embraced it.

“You will say, perhaps: But what, then, are those crosses?—They are crosses from without—crosses from enemies, from persons of false ideas,—they are deception, change of abode, the finding of nothing suitable; they are petty persecutions, petty calumnies, pin-pricks, false vocations, etc. All this tries us, but

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does not deject us. We know that it is in the midst of such tribulations that the reign of God is established and consolidated. Poor nature groans, but grace consoles, and some day we shall be very happy for having suffered a little. Pray for us, dear sister in Our Lord, that we may not pluck one thorn from the crown of our good Master. . . .”

In the multiplied contradictions of his life, this same heroic patience was seen: in his repeated sicknesses, in his father's opposition to his clerical vocation, in the employments so distasteful to his nature, both at Belley and La Seyne, in the difficulties of the Third Order of Mary, even the success of which became for him, by permission of Divine Providence, a cause of the most delicate trials; in the mental sufferings which preceded and followed his quitting the Society of Mary, which were so long, so crucifying, which pierced him to the very depths of his soul, and touched what he loved most here below.

We shall not pause to enumerate the very great difficulties attending the foundation of his Institute, undertaken without human help of any kind, without resources, without friends, without subjects capable of seizing his idea as he would have wished and devoting themselves to it as he did himself in the absolute sacrifice of self. But these obstacles were for him multiplied occasions of resignation, patience, and personal renunciation.

The hope of raising thrones of Exposition to Our Lord, whereon his Master would be adored and glorified, where souls would be sanctified by being drawn to him, “*cum exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad meipsum*—When I shall be raised above the earth, I

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shall draw all things to Myself"—this hope was his support, his strength, rendering him capable of unshaken patience. It led him to accept everything for the attainment of this noble end. He desired to be, as he said, "the fertilizer of the tree, rejoicing in being still good for something."

Detractors of his new undertaking were not wanting. This was of all his trials the most painful. To attack the Congregation that he was founding was to touch him to the quick. But behold what he said to explain and excuse the conduct of his detractors:

*"They do not understand the Work, and every one thinks to render it a service by opposing it. The demon is furious! I feel that this trial must continue to the end—yes, surely, yes!—I know well that the Work must be persecuted. Was not Our Lord persecuted during His whole life? And in His Eucharistic life, He is still much more so."*

Under the attacks of calumny, Père Eymard evinced the same imperturbable patience. He was several times calumniated to ecclesiastical authority, at Paris, at Tours, at Meaux, to Mgr. Morlot and to Mgr. Guibert. It even pursued him to Rome, in 1865, on the subject of his projected foundation of a House in Jerusalem.

He had also to undergo the trial of failure. His project of a House in Jerusalem came to naught, and his foundation at Nemours had to be abandoned at the end of two years. This created for him numerous difficulties, and was the occasion of the departure of several of his Religious upon whom he had lavished paternal care for several years. Without complaint or murmur, he accepted all with the words: "*God be*

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*praised for all things!"* He excused those that were to him a cause of intense suffering. Their ingratitude could not disturb his exterior composure. His only response was an effort to benefit them for all he had to endure.

The Servant of God had asked his Lord to be allowed to found his Congregation "without human consolation." His prayer was heard. Speaking to Brother Albert Tesnière, he once said: "*When I made the sacrifice of my vocation as Marist, I made the vow to devote myself till death to the Work of the Most Blessed Sacrament, to found a Society of adorers. I promised God that nothing should prevent me, had I even to eat stones and die in a poorhouse; and above all I asked Him to labor (oh! that was too much, but I did it) without any human consolation.*" Yes, he was heard. "*For four or five years,*" he added, "*the good God pursued me with His sweetness, His most tender consolations—and then he treated me a little differently! May He be praised!*" On another occasion, when speaking of his foundation, he uttered the words: "*God indeed heard me! God knows what I have suffered! Ah! He certainly heard me!*"

If the contact of natures different in education and opposite in character is in the Religious life one of the most fruitful sources of virtue, it is also the cause of much suffering. Here, too, Père Eymard exhibited unalterable patience. He was condescending and full of compassion for all defects. The want of simplicity alone found him severe, because it hurt his uprightness and spirit of truth. But for all the rest, he was a father, and patient as a father.

To children he was particularly kind and gentle.

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His patience was manifested toward the time of First Communion, when he examined the poor little ones who had been receiving catechetical instructions from one of his Religious. He questioned them so gently as to reassure the most timid, and encouraged them so kindly as to disarm the most stupid answers of the most unintelligent among them.

In the sicknesses that frequently overtook him, nothing could shake his patience. Austerities, labors, and mental anxiety had worn out his constitution. The greater part of his life, he was tried by ill-health: rheumatism, sick headaches, neuralgia were for him daily events, and a catarrhal affection, which he denominated a cold, troubled him and added to the fatigue of preaching; but he never treated it seriously. With all this to annoy him, never did he evince the slightest movement of impatience, none of those passing signs of annoyance that we so readily pardon in a sufferer. Nothing ruffled the serenity of his soul, or the amiability of his character. He was always peaceful, smiling, and easy of access. Never was there a patient who demanded less care. He was contented with everything, accepted everything, complained of nothing. Patience like his, which never belied itself, is characteristic of a great soul and the sure sign of sanctity. "*When one has suffered much,*" he used to say, "*he becomes an instrument of sanctification, an instrument for the glory of God.*" And that is what he himself was.

Admirable openness of character was united in Père Eymard with his angelic purity, forming, as it were, its complement.

"One day, the mother of a very pious and re-



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spectable family, a member of the Third Order of Mary and a near relative of one of the Marists, being with him in the parlor of the novitiate of Lyons, he was obliged to leave her for a half-hour. As it was very cold, he threw over her shoulders his own large cloak, but with such simplicity, candor, and innocence mingled with reserve and modesty, that she was exceedingly edified. This highly praiseworthy lady, whom we knew very intimately, was herself a soul of the same spiritual calibre as Père Eymard.

"This incident proclaims the dispositions ordinarily following upon a virtuous youth. Innocence preserved presents quite another aspect, has a freshness quite different from that of virtue recovered by repentance."

His saintly youth had stamped upon Père Eymard's person ineffaceable traces of innocence. A certain merchant of Lyons, his penitent, used to say: "Ah! how pure that man is! What an angelic nature! He told me things and asked me questions that made me see the whiteness of his own soul."

A lady given to novel-reading, but who at the same time communicated often, spoke to him in the confessional of her frivolous inclination, and tried to justify herself. . . . "*Ah! as for myself,*" replied Père Eymard, "*I do not know how you can like such reading. One day, I found in one of our colleges of which I was director, a volume of Sir Walter Scott's works, which they say is his best. I had taken it from one of the pupils. I thought I would glance over it, and see for myself. Well,—I afterward went to confession!*" It was the lady mentioned above who told this to Père Mayet.

The Servant of God was strictly reserved in his in-



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tercourse with others. Père Mayet says: "Perfectly to reveal the heart of this holy friend, I shall tell something about him which will again exemplify his simplicity and prudence. A lady of a distinguished family of Lorraine, joined to quite uncommon sanctity and great nobility of soul manners sometimes very child-like,—the outcome of her perfect purity of heart.

"As she was greatly tried by certain pains of conscience, God sent to her Père Eymard to enlighten her on an important point. He soon gained such influence over her by the ascendancy of his virtues and his counsels filled with the unction of God that, at his voice, light entered her soul and she clearly saw what Our Lord demanded of her. The joy of feeling her soul set free gave wings to her gratitude and produced in her such expansion of sentiment that, in their first interview, not thinking of what she was doing, she touched Père Eymard's hands.

"But seeing his look of displeasure, she instantly excused herself for her inadvertence. *'True,'* he said, *'it is just as if you gave me a blow. It is like a scald. I know very well that you did it in the greatest simplicity, and that you have sullied neither your own soul nor mine. But it is not proper, and annoys me greatly. I like to treat only with souls. I always look at them apart from the body.'*"

Père Mayet, to whom we are indebted for these incidents, adds: "These facts show Père Eymard's horror for natural sentiments, also the purity of his intercourse with others; in a word, his prudence and simplicity. I have often been a witness of both."

Père Eymard was always remarkable for a certain independence of persons, which warded off danger and was for him a safeguard.

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"During his journeys, when he was Superior at La Seyne, the occasions of accepting invitations were frequent. But as soon as he arrived in any city, he at once engaged his room at a hotel, and gave himself up to the affairs that had brought him thither. This conduct clothed him with holy dignity. *"How dignified and priestly,"* he would say, *"to give to all, and to receive from none!"* He would not take a glass of water in the house of a pupil's parents. After an illness, some among them begged him to come and recuperate in their home. But he remarked to one of his friends: *"If I should accept such offers, would I be free to send home to a father a child whose presence would be injurious to the College?"*

During that same illness, friends on all sides desired to have him as their guest until he should have repaired his strength. But he said to Père Mayet: *"No! No! to live among people who confess to me,—no,—never!"* And he withdrew to the Novitiate of Montbel.

"But this House, lately established, was wanting in everything. A family of La Seyne, extremely devoted to the Society of Mary, with admirable and delicate charity sent him his meals daily. But he was so confused at this that he hastened to change his lodgings.

"As for the rest, however, they were very much edified by his discretion during the short time that he sojourned in that establishment. Seeing the House so poor, he dared ask nothing from the Fathers and Brothers of what was needed for his recovery." (*Père Mayet's Notes.*)

Like St. Francis de Sales, Pere Eymard was most disinterested with regard to worldly affairs.

"He might have profited by his intimate and mul-

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tiplied relations with a large number of wealthy families and by the singular veneration they had for him, to obtain for his Society of Mary money, gifts, and donations. But neither did he take, at La Seyne or elsewhere, a step nor say a word to that end. Indeed, he never even thought of doing so. He felt extreme repugnance for everything that tended that way, and these noble sentiments he preserved to the end. He was exceedingly jealous of his religious independence. The good of souls, the glory of God—such was his only aim. He had conferred a very great benefit on a certain lady by helping her to put her affairs of conscience in order. Generous and possessed of considerable wealth, she offered him her services. His reply was: *"When I have had spiritual relations with a soul, when I have given her advice, I wish to have nothing natural between her and me."*

Speaking of his purity of soul, his sister Marianne, who spent with him the years of his youth and those of his parochial ministry, said in 1850: "He always led a pure and irreproachable life. I never saw him commit a deliberate venial sin. I knew him as a child such as he is to-day, and were he not my brother, I should add that he has preserved intact the grace of Baptism."

At the time of his leaving the Marists and of the foundation of his own Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament, one of his former confrères, not understanding his supernatural motives, and deprecating such a resolution, so far forgot himself as to say: "I very much fear that God will humble Père Eymard by some heavy fall."

These mortifying words reached the ears of him

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about whom they were spoken. He said not a word, but went straight to the feet of Our Lord in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and said: "*Ah! my God! Thou hast preserved me all my life from such faults! . . .*" These words are an ingenuous avowal. They show the virtue of him who pronounced them, and they corroborate all that has been said of his purity. His virtue of chastity manifested itself in many other ways, especially in his discourses and exhortations to incline others to love for the angelic virtue and hatred of the contrary vice.

## XIV

### HIS HEROIC TEMPERANCE, MORTIFICATION, AND POVERTY.

THE Servant of God was ever a man of penance and mortification, endeavoring by this means to restore to God the honor snatched from Him by sin. He aimed at fulfilling the counsel of the Apostle: "*Adimpleo quæ desunt passionum Christi*—I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ."

We have already spoken of his interior mortification. We shall now prove that he knew how to chastise his body, and thus give to Our Lord new and unequivocal testimonies of love.

To speak of his spirit of mortification, it would be necessary to retrace his whole life even to his earliest days, when he already practised rigorous fasts and imposed on himself penitential works far beyond his years.

His penance increased with age and ceased not till death. Thus his whole life was one continual immolation of self to God on the altar of mortification. From his youth, he understood and practised this law of solid virtue. "*Without corporal mortification,*" he used to say, "*we merely amuse ourselves.*"

When preparing for his First Communion, he fasted the whole of Lent, sharing with his schoolmates or with the poor the luncheon his mother had prepared for him, and keeping to himself the secret of his privation. Indeed, his fasts in his early years were excessive.

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His spirit of mortification increased when at the Seminary, in his parochial ministry, among the Marists, and lastly, in his own Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He always treated his body rudely, inflicting on it expiation for the imperfections of which he deemed himself guilty. He passed over nothing, as his diary shows very clearly, and his vigilance over self was admirable. He was never heard to complain of cold or heat, nor of the thousand inconveniences of life, in all of which he was ingenious in finding occasions of self-mortification. We know that he frequently made use of penitential instruments, for we have his blood-stained discipline. When we recall his feeble health during his whole life, his constant headaches, his insomnia, the excessive fatigue of his absorbing ministry,—this voluntary corporal mortification added to so many others, shows the generosity of his elect soul.

After having so perfectly practised daily mortification himself, he was highly qualified to teach it to his disciples. He said to Père Tesnière, December 10, 1867, speaking of mortification: "*In it are life, holiness, and happiness.*" And a few days later, on December 15: "*See, my dear boy, (1) without that we achieve nothing. I know that all my resolutions are vain unless followed by some strokes as a crowning point. One must punish one's self, punish one's self again and always. That, in fact, is the religious spirit in respect to the body.*"

Under simple and ordinary appearances, the Servant of God concealed extreme austerity of life.

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(1) Père Tesnière was very young at this time, about twenty. He had entered the Congregation at fifteen.

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The Superior General of the Fathers of Saint Vincent de Paul, a simple Religious at the time that Père Eymard preached the Forty Hours in a church very distant from his convent, used to come for him every evening in a carriage. The good Religious remarked that he never leaned against the back of the carriage during the whole drive, which was very long. This little circumstance shows the holy skill with which he lost no opportunity of renouncing his own ease and of mortifying himself.

Although of excessive sobriety, he accepted without remark whatever nourishment was offered him. At the beginning of his foundation and for quite a notable time, the Brother prepared every Monday the food needed for the following week. Père Eymard passed it over without remark. But with such a diet mortification must have played a very large part. Yet to all this, he frequently joined privations, taking only a portion of what was presented him. Such privation added to the fatigue of the ministry, very quickly diminished his strength and, doubtless, shortened a life so precious and so necessary to his sons.

He suffered from frequent and violent headaches. For many years he used snuff, and tobacco had become for him almost indispensable. It was his only remedy. Nevertheless, he did not hesitate from the very first days of his foundation, to give it up through respect for the Most Blessed Sacrament. To this sacrifice, which cost him so much, he added, also through respect for Our Lord exposed, that of the skull-cap, which he had worn on account of his neuralgia. He wrote to Mlle. Guillot: *"It was on the 8th of December that I begged of the Blessed Virgin*



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*the strength to give up tobacco and the skull-cap, and this good Mother obtained it for me up to the present. I am glad, and it no longer costs me. It is a little sacrifice. Their use would not be proper around Our Lord."*

He also imposed another mortification on himself, that of fasting on the days prescribed by Holy Church, and especially during Lent. This mortification was heroic for him, since for a long time his delicate health had not permitted him continuous fasts. On February 9, 1864, he wrote in his diary: "To-morrow, Ash-Wednesday, February 10, beautiful day for the Society! It will cover its head with ashes, gird its body with the mortification of Our Lord, fill its heart with amorous compunction. It will spend in this way forty days with Jesus doing penance; then it will go with Him to Calvary, into the tomb, and lastly, it will arise with Him full of life and strength. It will go to the Cenacle and there raise a throne of love to the *God of the Eucharist*." He desired that his Religious should pass the forty days of Lent in fasting and perfect abstinence, and he himself, whose general state of health was so precarious, wished to be the first bound by this rule.

Like all the friends of God, Venerable Père Eymard was familiar with suffering under all its forms. He very frequently drank of that bitter chalice in which courageous souls renew their strength tenfold, for very far from being an obstacle, suffering is the way to God. The spirit of penitence was his shield. He knew how to make for himself occasions of mortification; besides, his continual headaches, without speaking of his frequent spells of sickness, made

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everything in that line very possible for him. He used to say: *"Ah! when one has no virtue, God lets him sleep in a kind of security; but when He sees a loving soul, He hastens to crucify it that He may find in it His glory. Love lives in pain."* (Month of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 12th Day.)

*"Ah, the good God knows what He means by that. He knows how to manage in order to make His friends, His saints suffer, but to suffer with God alone, to tell one's pain only to Him . . . that is the heroism of sanctity. . . ."* (Month of St. Joseph, 26th Day.)

His counsels as a director of souls are full of this fundamental thought. To it he incessantly returns, urging on generous souls in that path. He longed to increase in them the love of suffering, the spirit of penance. *"Without that,"* he used to say, *"you will accomplish nothing lasting; on the contrary, that spirit will make your whole life a holocaust offered to the glory of God. . . ."*

*"Foster, then, the spirit of penance. Mortify yourself in everything, by means of everything, in body and in soul, in mind and in heart, out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ. Ah! how I wish these words were fire and engraven with a red-hot iron in your heart! Do not look at the pain, but only at the unction. The Cross is more of a consolation than a punishment. The saints understood this, and that is the reason they embraced it with so much love and joy!"*

To Mme. J——, on June 29, 1852, he wrote these beautiful words on suffering and mortification:

*" . . . As for myself, I fear death, and I beg our good God to ward it off still. When I think of the*

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price of the present life, what it has cost Our Lord, of the glory we procure to God, of the merit and the love of sufferings, I can not resign myself to die, to go to the God of Eternity as the child of a day. It is a great, a divine thing to suffer for the love of God, to sacrifice to Him all that we have and all that we are.

"To pass through life, to glorify God, and die, is a beautiful motto. But under what emblem shall we represent it? I know none other than that of Jesus Crucified, or the soul on the Cross with Jesus. . . ."

This mortification, impressed upon his emaciated face, was veiled under a reflection of indefinable good nature, which won for him the title of "another Curé d'Ars."

Speaking of Père Eymard at the time of his foundation, Père Mayet says: "Our friend's emaciated face was more like the head of a skeleton covered with skin, but on it beamed the sweet and serene light of his glance, like that of the Curé d'Ars."

Between these two holy souls there was, besides the moral likeness, a personal resemblance also. It was so great that on seeing Père Eymard, some thought him the Curé d'Ars. This happened one day in the streets of Angers. But Père Eymard hastened to disabuse the strangers, saying "*You make a mistake. The Curé d'Ars was a saint, and I—I am only a sinner.*"

"While still young," Père Mayet goes on to say, "his brow was shaded by thin gray hair, the fruit of the trials and labors he had undergone. But his energy of soul appeared to give new strength to the body. '*I want to accustom myself to everything,*' he used to say."

Mortification is the guardian of holy purity, therefore we are not surprised to learn that Père Eymard's love for the beautiful virtue was scrupulous, strong, extreme. God had placed in his heart the virginal instinct, which made him, though still very young, call himself to account if he dared to look a woman in the face. When quite a child, a companion older than he allowed himself some unbecoming remarks in his presence. Julien's modesty would not permit him to speak on the subject, and so he resorted to writing. In his note he warned the offender either never again to allow such expressions to escape him, or never again to consider him a companion.

The dissolute feared him. A youth of about twenty used some light words before him. Julien turned upon him sharply, telling him never again to make his appearance in that house, unless resolved to correct at once and forever.

When a seminarist at Grenoble, the Abbé Eymard, during the vacations that he passed at La Mure, often went with his fellow-students to the house of a mutual friend, the Abbé Dumolard, who later on like himself entered the Society of Mary. But while the others played at cricket or other active sports, Julien retired apart to pray. Among themselves, the students called him "*the virgin.*"

His admirable innocence was not preserved, however, without a struggle, and these struggles were the occasion of one of the most delicate trials of his life. Furious at seeing so much purity and courage in this beautiful soul, the demon attacked him by bad thoughts. "*No one,*" he said one day to Père Mayet, "*knows what I had to endure for six or seven years.*"

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*That was the reason, after I became a priest, of my having something military, something warlike, either in my tone, or in my word and gestures, when I preached to the pupils in our colleges. I had contracted the habit in my youth. I used to defend myself with energetic words. Sometimes I said to God: 'My God, rather cut off my arms and legs, cut off my head,—but save me from sin!'*"

"To fill up the measure of his woe" (we quote from Père Mayet's *Notes*), "he who should have supported him in his trial only redoubled his agony. The poor child, after having suffered rude assaults, after having valiantly struggled and gained brilliant victories, confessed having had bad thoughts, at which the inexperienced confessor threw him into inexpressible anguish of soul by his reproaches. Such anguish for a soul that loves Our Lord is worse than death.

"Then, as God was strongly attracting him to the priesthood, and his father would not give consent, the priest to whom he stated his case told him that he was a proud boy even to think of that holy state.

"Julien, who was so ardently in love with the good God, who desired nothing so much as to please Him, who would have preferred to die a thousand times than voluntarily offend Him, was all upset. At last, one day, he happened to hear a priest explaining what his confessor should have taught him long before, namely, that there is no sin in having bad thoughts, but only in consenting to them, according to the word of Saint Bernard: '*Non nocet sensus, ubi deest consensus*—Sense hurts not where consent is wanting.'

"At this word, the happy child felt an enormous weight lifted from his heart, and he cried out joy-

fully: *'I have always been God's!'* It was heaven emerging from hell.

"He told me later that the injudicious manner in which he himself had been treated had been very useful to others. 'Ah!' he said, 'if I had been well directed, I might have become a great saint! If I had the happiness of meeting a child so prevented by grace, and who would so eagerly ask me to make him know and love God,—ah! I should be very careful not to repulse him. What they made me suffer on this point! No, certainly, I would not reject him when he asked me to hear his confession.'

"Père Eymard in after life consoled, strengthened, cured, and led on to good many young men by saying to them: *'And I, too, my child, I have had bad thoughts, but we must banish them, and not dwell on them.'*

"*'According to what I know,'* he once said, *'despair is the cause of most of the sins of young people. They despair of conquering, and they lay down their arms without a struggle.'*"

We take the following from a conversation which Père Tesnière had with him, and which he afterward recorded in his notebook:

"I was," said Père Eymard, "confirmed at ten years and a half, before making my First Communion, which I did at La Mure. From that time, the demon tempted, tormented me horribly on the subject of holy purity. If I had not had Communion to strengthen me, I should have fallen. How many blows I gave myself! How many pricks with pins! but above all *blows!* Then I slipped planks into my bed, but that hurt too much, for at that time I was so thin! Between

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the age of ten and twenty, I would neither touch nor look a woman in the face for all the gold in the world.—Oh! I dared not.—Even my mother and sister I treated respectfully, but not affectionately, as so many children do, and that lawfully.”

On April 4, 1848, he wrote to his sisters, who were inconsolable at his entrance among the Marists and their consequent separation: “Your good letters have given me real pleasure. I never doubted your love for me, and I might even reproach you with having too much, since it is this great affection that has given you so much suffering. But I, too, must say that I have shared it with you as a brother. The good God knows that I love only two in the world with that natural Christian love, and those two are you.”

Toward the year 1865, a certain very pious and devout lady expressed her admiration for the Servant of God in rather extravagant terms, which drew upon her the comment of others. As calumny is, alas! an easy thing, Père Eymard himself became more or less implicated. When he learned what was said of him, he was extremely pained. One day unable to restrain himself longer, he went to Père Champion, his friend, and said to him with tears: “*At least you, I am sure,—you do not believe the calumny that is circulating against me!*”—“Oh! no, my friend,” replied Père Champion, “I know you too well to believe such a thing for an instant!”

In the holy tribunal, he loved to cut short details on delicate matters, preferring a thousand times to remain in the dark concerning them. An estimable man of the city of L——, a man of high standing, and a very good friend of Père Eymard, once forgot



himself in his presence and gave expression to some light words. In an indignant tone, the Servant of God said afterward: *"Ah! let him not do that again, or I shall give him to understand that he is never to set foot in my house again. He will learn to know me. . . ."*

A certain lady, one of his penitents, went during his absence from the city to another director, who showed great zeal for the interest of her soul, a zeal really supernatural, but perhaps a little too ardent and apparently with a slight admixture of the natural. She did not return to him, and in speaking of the circumstance at a later period, she exclaimed: "Ah! who will give me back my Père Eymard! No one ever had more charity for my soul, but it was angelic charity, and holy as God."

The spirit of poverty possessed the Servant of God long before he founded his Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament,—yes, during his whole life. He had no ambition to become rich, no hankering after money, and he knew how without murmur to share the little his parents could command. His youth was passed in poverty, as were also the first years of his parochial ministry. The only complaint his sister had to make of him was that he gave everything away without a thought of his own needs. Of this we have already spoken. When he became Curé of Monteynard, all he had left of his ministry at Chatte were sixty centimes, something over half a franc.

It might be supposed that this spirit of poverty accompanied him into the religious life, and truly it did. He loved evangelical poverty. He not only willingly bore its inconveniences, but he even sought them, and

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he knew well how to find occasions for practising it more perfectly. The time came however, when he did not have to look for such occasions. At the beginning of his foundation there were numerous opportunities for the practice of effective poverty, and he felt all its rigors. On quitting the Society of Mary, he took with him only sufficient for his journey, about 200 francs, given him by his Superior. They were expended for traveling expenses and to defray his sojourn with the Fathers of the Sacred Heart, *rue d'Enfer*, during the twelve days of his Retreat, May, 1856. It is easy to conceive the privation of that first period of foundation, for everything was wanting, excepting faith in the Eucharist and absolute confidence in Its help.

In his letters of this period we see his admirable abandonment to Divine Providence. On May 30, 1856, he wrote to Mme. Gourd: "What troubles us a little is that our new Cenacle is going to begin like Jesus at Bethlehem, and we have not wherewith to receive the good Master worthily. But it looks as if He desires to find His delights in poverty, so we too, rejoice in it. We superabound with happiness, for we are going to follow His life, His retreat at Nazareth, and I hope His apostolic labors, the day of His Passion, and His glory in eternity.

"I am not saying this to interest you temporally in us. Oh! no. We are in the service of a rich King, kind and all-powerful, but only to beg you to thank Him for having chosen us. We have our daily bread, so do not be anxious about us. . . ."

In November, 1856, to the trials of the first months were added still others, and their need was extreme. The Servant of God wrote to Mère Marguerite:

“ . . . For covering, we have what is generally necessary, and when we are cold, we put on our cloak.”

It is easy to understand from the above how little it took to satisfy the good Founder, how little it took to make him declare that they had all that was *necessary*, above all, when we hear of his simple avowal in the same letter of his having noticed that half the linen he had brought with him was fit only for hospital use.

“The Reverend Mère Guyot, Superioress of the Convent of the Good Shepherd, *rue d’Enfer*, Paris, had frequent relations with Père Eymard. She knew better than others the extreme poverty of those early days. She it was who gave to him the first Exposition Throne for his chapel at 114, *rue d’Enfer*, and all else necessary for the divine service. She also furnished the altar breads. Yes, the new foundation was in want of everything, and Père Eymard and his companions were often obliged at noonday to rap at the door of the Good Shepherd, in order to take a modest repast. He repaid this charity by preaching for us,” said the narrator, “about the Most Blessed Sacrament, which he so ardently loved.”

Not only on this first foundation was poverty the supernatural means to the end in view, but it was the same in all his other undertakings. He found it at Marseilles, Angers, Brussels. It was ever his faithful companion, and in it he read the assurance of success.

Later, January 11, 1863, he wrote to Mère Marguerite: “I almost regret our early poverty. It was so sweet to say: *We have it not!* How easily we can do without everything excepting God!” In spite of

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this regret, however, effective poverty was still a part of his life, for he wished to be ever among the truly poor of Jesus Christ.

He was often seen in an old hat and worn soutane, but neat and without rents, although he took part in all the household employments, above all in those that called for the greatest charity and devotedness. He always wore his garments threadbare. One day a charitable lady saw him in hose so old that the color could no longer be distinguished, and so mended that a beggar would not have picked them up if thrown away. She at once took some new ones to the Brother in care of the linen, suggesting that he would give them to Père Eymard. When the latter on entering his cell found there the new hose, he immediately took them back to the linen-keeper, and this he did with everything given him for his own use and comfort.

When fatigued and ill, and something was sent him for his relief, he joyfully and secretly carried it to his dear poor. The spirit that animated him in early youth and at Monteynard still led him to accept nothing for himself. He desired to live and die in poverty.

He long felt the privations of effective poverty and its material fetters. In a letter to Père du Cuers, February 21, 1859, he writes: ". . . Here nature sometimes surprises one into a pagan fear as to where to turn for one's living, where to look for the payment of expenses, since we are without fixed resources, excepting yours and the Masses. But confidence in God comes quickly to chase that demon away, and make us hope against all hope in the good Master, who has given us so many proofs of His infinite goodness. I often have nothing left, not even a *sou*. Then I bless

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God for it, He knows all about it, and wants to try us! '*Etiam si occiderit me, in ipso sperabo*—Though He should slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' . . .” Again to the same, July 1, 1860, he acknowledges that he has not money for a journey to Marseilles, having at his disposal only eighty francs sent by Père du Cuers himself. Again in a letter of the following September, the departure of several subjects who could not subject themselves to the privations of a foundation led him to say: “Jesus, Emperor of Emperors, is too poor, too mortified, and too pure for the world, and even for *the devout*. Ah! how few souls there are who love Jesus for Himself and who are willing to serve Him for His glory alone! It is frightful! . . .”

Then he adds, speaking of his poverty: “Yes, may He be blessed, that paternal Providence who feeds us every day with so much goodness! It is a proof that He loves us and accepts our services, very imperfect as they are, at the feet of Jesus, Our Saviour. *I am so often at the last centime* that I ask myself how God is going to supply, and from what side will help come, for you know our resources, and our expenses are great, above all, unforeseen ones, enormous impositions, interest, etc. . . . Ah, well! all will come in its own good time. Frequently, *I dare not purchase something for fear of increasing the debt of the good God*, and then it comes in time. I may say that it is like a continued miracle. It is the manna in the desert, and it falls every day.”

In his letter of October 25, 1860, he says to the same: “. . . I have advanced to Père Leroyer fifty francs for his journey to Marseilles, and fourteen for that to

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Angers. But my poor purse is empty, and if our good Master were not *so good*, I should fear for to-morrow. . . .”

These words of the Servant of God tell more clearly than anything the writer could pen how great was his poverty at this time as well as his unalterable confidence in God. Our Lord was truly his Provider. He had begged Him to take upon Himself the temporal affairs of the Institute. *“I have,”* he says, *“suppliated Our Lord so to manage things that we may have no need of asking help from any one. I have promised Him never to beg. How unhappy are they who depend upon the rich! They ask of them, they receive from them, they see themselves obliged to certain concessions, they take on the spirit of the world, and thus the gangrene enters the whole body. Oh! how I bless God for having freed us by assuring to us competency!”*

In his commentary on the *Pater noster*, at the petition, “Give us this day our daily bread,” he wrote: “Lord Jesus, who didst daily in the desert rain down manna for the needs of Thy people, who didst will Thyself to be alone the whole portion and inheritance of the Levites, who didst bequeath to the Apostles Thy divine poverty, we wish in all things for treasurer and provider but Thee alone and we choose Thee as such. Be thou alone our food and our clothing, our treasure and our glory, our remedy in sickness, and our protection against our enemies. We promise Thee to receive nothing, to desire not even human favor, nothing from the friendship of the world. Thou alone wilt be for us all things, and men nothing! From men we desire nothing but the cross and forgetfulness!”

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"Is it not for the Master," he said on another occasion, "to feed his servants? Are we not in the service of Our Lord? If we serve Him well, He will not forget us."

—What did it matter to him to be poor in the fleeting goods of this world,—he so rich in truth and in personal love for God,—he so rich in the great thought which was to give birth to his Religious Congregation,—he so rich in the goods of heaven!



## XV

### HIS HEROIC HUMILITY.

THE poor in spirit must also be the humble of heart. Humility is the fundamental virtue, and Venerable Père Eymard, because of his great love for God and the neighbor, possessed it in a high degree. "*To be humble,*" he used to say, "*is to love Jesus humbled.*" We may then affirm, in a measure *a priori*, that he was *humble*, for he passionately loved Jesus Christ Sacramental.

Again, he said: "*To be humble is to receive from God with submission of heart humiliation as a blessing, it is to accept one's state and one's duties and not to be ashamed of one's condition. If I love Jesus, I ought to resemble Him, to love what He loves, to do what He has done, what He prefers to everything else. . . . How easy is this humility of heart! There is question of a very elevated, a very honorable sentiment, namely, to imitate Jesus Christ, to love Him.*"

Viewed in this light, humility loses its repulsiveness. Nature forgets its abasement when the soul feels that it is mounting toward Jesus Christ. This was another of his pithy sayings: "*Our Lord does not ask us to love humility but to love Jesus humiliated.*" This virtue of humility, which is that of the devoted servant, is none other than the personal renunciation demanded by Our Lord: "*Si quis vult post Me venire, abneget semetipsum*—If any one wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself." Père Eymard wished it to be the fundamental virtue

of his sons, the characteristic of their sanctity, for it flows from love as its authentic proof. "*It is*," he used to say, "*the sympathetic virtue of the sacramental state.*" His humility did not shine forth in exterior manifestations or in words that tended to lower himself. It had become the very groundwork of his soul, so filling his heart and mind that nothing could appear more natural. There was nothing morose in it, no trace of chagrin; on the contrary, he was gay, amiable, full of animation, promoting satisfaction and good humor by his pleasing discourse when charity demanded his contributing to the conversation.

His discretion in maintaining silence on his own spiritual affairs was very noticeable. The particular graces he had received from Our Lord at different periods of his life became known only when, through inadvertence permitted by God, he allowed some words to escape that betrayed his secret; otherwise, he kept absolute silence on such points.

Thus it was that he never spoke to any one of the immense favor he had received at Fourvière, January 21, 1851, when the Blessed Virgin intrusted him with the mission of founding a new Congregation in the Church. Not a word in his Notes recalls this fact, which was the first impulse to all his after efforts, excepting one phrase transcribed by him in a copy of one of his letters thirteen years after the event. But that allusion would be unintelligible to any that had not heard of the heavenly favor. Père Eymard's lines ran thus: "*To-day, thirteen years ago, Our Lord at Fourvière deigned to impart to me the sweet and beautiful thought of the Most Blessed Sacrament. May He be forever praised and blessed!*"

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One person, however, made the exception, and that was the Reverend Mère Marguerite. In 1864, before quitting Paris for Angers, she was let into the secret. Père Eymard had then grave reason for speaking. He wished to strengthen her to face the difficulties which she was going to encounter in this separation rendered necessary by circumstances. And there was one other. Some months before the holy Founder's death, Père Tesnière, in a conversation with him, surprised upon his lips a half-avowal of the signal favor.

His virtues like his celestial favors, like the secrets of his life of union with Our Lord, were hidden under the mantle of the common life. His humility enjoined upon him a modest silence also, on occasions in which his wisdom, his judgment, his experience of men and things gave him the right to speak and to maintain his opinion. The following fact was related by Mère Marguerite. It happened at the bishopric of Angers: "Mgr. Angebeault and other ecclesiastics were discussing a question upon which opinions were divided. Père Eymard kept silence. At last the Bishop, addressing him directly, begged him to say what he thought. Then he responded so clearly, so judiciously, that he at once won all to his opinion."

What edifying examples of humility he gave in his own convent when he performed the duties incumbent on the simple lay-brothers! Above all, at the beginning of the foundation, when it was necessary to face every conjuncture and put a hand to every kind of work, did Père Eymard show of what his humility was made,—pure gold without alloy! The simplicity with which he acquitted himself of all such tasks was charming.

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But how happy was he to devote himself to whatever regarded the worship and cleanliness of the sanctuary! He used to say that in his Congregation, "everyone ought to be sacristan," that the sacristan's duties are the most important of all, come first of all, because they bring him constantly under the eyes of Our Lord.

It was his humility that made him listen quietly to strictures on his own manner of acting. His first companion once delivered himself of some rather strong, but quite unjustifiable remarks upon his government. Père Eymard replied as follows, September 21, 1861, the tone of his words admirably revealing his humility:

" . . . I, indeed, approve what you say to me as to the course to follow, it is true; but God has shown us, to you as well as to me, that we must pass through trials, and that one does not always see very clearly at such times.

"I know well, indeed *very* well, that I am wanting in many of the qualities that a Superior ought to have, that what your charity denominates good-nature is rather a weakness of character and a defect. I groan over it and, if it were God's will, I would at this moment resign forever all superiority to go cook in the kitchen, or take the last employment in the house. I would do so with pleasure. It is not that I am discouraged,—no, no! I humble myself before God for it. Besides, I have need of that. You must be well aware, dear Father, you and all the others, that it is not by my qualifications nor my virtues that the Society gets along, but by the pure grace of God, for I am a mar-all.

"The experience that I may have of men and the

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Religious life falls short when applied to the actual life. The contemplative life is an ever-present mirror which nothing escapes, where nature often ends by going to pieces on its perpetual Calvary.

"Oh, how often I say to Our Lord: Send a good Superior! *I*—I am only a bad fertilizer for the tree, or an old foundation stone that ought to be hidden away.

"As the Superior has need of prayers, here after the Rosary, we add a *Pater* and *Ave* for his intentions and for the others recommended. I beg you to do the same. It will, at least, be a prayer of gratitude as well as charity."

When there was question of his own Superiority, his humility was ever in evidence. In February, 1866, he was very ill at Brussels, for some hours even in danger of death. But the end was averted. On April 2, 1866, he wrote to his first companion:

". . . For two or three hours I was very ill, and I thought of sending for you before I grew worse, that I might embrace you for the last time. Then a reaction changed my condition.

"I begged God to let me die, for am I not an obstacle rather than a help? I resigned myself into His hands, for He knows what is good for me. I do not refuse to labor and sacrifice myself, but for no earthly consideration would I be a Jonas in the vessel that is bearing us to the shore of eternity with the graces and the mission of the Society. . . ."

As we have said elsewhere, his humility made him demand his non-election at the first General Chapter of 1865. He wished to be the last, though not the least devoted to the good of his dear Religious family. His

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desires were not listened to, and he had to resume until death the burden of Superiority.

Nothing shows more plainly his profound humility than what he wrote at Rome, March 19, 1865, the Feast of Saint Joseph, when consecrating himself to him: "As for myself, I shall honor, love, and serve you with Mary, my Mother, and shall never separate you from her name, from her love! I ask from you no temporal goods, not the increase of the Society, not to see it great and powerful. You beheld Jesus only lowly, poor, humiliated; you never saw His glory nor assisted at His triumphs.

"Ah! how willingly I wish to be the poor laborer, the ignored Joseph, the despised carpenter, the fertilizer of the tree, the gardener of the good Master, who goes not forth from his garden, who knows only its plants, who loves only its flowers, who lives only on its fruits, who dies there in the corner of his little cabin, but in the arms of Jesus and Mary—whose sepulchre is unknown whose remains are not honored, who left behind him only his mantle of poverty and humility!"

Père Eymard's humility was lovable, and made one forget that he was humble. Although averse to honors and eulogiums, nevertheless he appeared to accept them. He said to an intimate friend: "*When they praise me, they insult me, they mock me! But I prefer to receive the praise than to protest. How many, by their professions of humility, place the crown on their own head!*"

Every year when the feast of Saint Peter came round, in order to shun the celebration of his name's day and escape the testimonies of veneration that he

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feared from friends or from his own spiritual sons, he used to hurry away to Angers and there spend several days in retirement unknown to his acquaintances of the city.

Père Mayet tells us in his Notes: Père Eymard attributed nothing to himself, but referred all to God. Knowing the really extraordinary benedictions that God poured in a torrent upon his College of La Seyne-sur-Mer, from 1851 to 1856, when he was Superior, to encourage his confrères, he said to them one day:

*"Let us not be frightened at what fails us. God effects great things with great miseries, by great miseries, provided we have much humility. There is only one thing with which He can do nothing, and that is pride!"*

He did not fear to use words of disparagement about himself. Being one day in the parlor of the House in Paris with a lady who was making a Retreat under his direction, he asked another present to copy for him a paper on which he had written a meditation. The copyist, who was at the time very slightly acquainted with Père Eymard, copied the page exactly as it stood with two errors in spelling. When she had finished, Père Eymard took the sheet, read it, smiled and, pointing out the faults, said: *"I did that, but you need not have done it also."*

One day, as we are told by M. l'Abbé Germain Lafond, of La Mure, some one felicitated him on his influence and high position. Père Eymard responded: *"I am the son of an oil-presser."* We might recall here his sentiments of humility when he was seeking to obtain from the Bishop of Grenoble the authorization to quit his parish of Monteynard in order to enter among the Marists.



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Humiliations are the touchstone of humility. It was while enduring them that the Servant of God gave evidence of the truth of his own. He was familiar with the trials of contradiction, failure, and calumny, but under them his soul lost nothing of its habitual calm. He saw too clearly the Hand of God in the painful events through which he had to pass not to repeat in every one of them his word of filial submission: "*God be praised for everything!*"

We have seen him, even in childhood, triumphing over humiliations in order to respond to the divine call, and without help obstinately and perseveringly struggling with the first difficulties of Latin. But all this was only the shadow of the trials and humiliations that he encountered later at the decisive epoch of his life, that of his foundation of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

On July 8, 1856, he wrote to Mlle. Guillot: "I have received some very painful letters. I have seen all that they think, and I know all that they say. God knows it, God wills it for the best. I say to myself, may He be blessed! And I think I have answered calmly and charitably." We might cite here the letter of Père Denys, who was still scandalized at Père Eymard's leaving the Marists, and the kindly and peaceable answer of the latter.

Ever deeply penetrated with the thought of his own insufficiency and unworthiness, before departing for Paris where before God he desired to study for the last time and submit to the examination of ecclesiastical authority the thought of his foundation of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament, he wrote, May 1, 1856, to Mme. Sauvestre de la Boura-

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lière, of Poitiers: "If God, in His infinite goodness, says to me: '*Go on! Mount this fiery Calvary,*' with His grace and the desire of His love, I shall consummate the sacrifice. I have the sword and the victim at my disposal, the dispensation from my vows; but its effect is suspended until the end of my Retreat. If, on the contrary, in His infinite goodness and on account of my unworthiness, God tells me to return to Lyons, I shall set out immediately without other regret than that of not having been sufficiently holy to aspire to the honor of serving more directly and more absolutely the good Jesus, the great King of Love. . . ." Later, when speaking of these hours of agony followed by the joys of the foundation, he exclaimed: "*How good is God! Is it possible that He has chosen me for so beautiful a work!*"

In 1866, he saw closed at Nemours one of his Houses founded about two years. He saw fall a throne raised to Our Lord with so much love, and it was for him the most sensible trial God could impose upon him. Still more, he saw himself despised, injured, attacked, calumniated, and he lost caste with several Bishops. Then he wrote to Mère Marguerite, May 18, 1867: "*God be blessed! One must resign one's self to suffer and to pardon without gall and without retaliation.*" He had previously written on March 3, in the midst of other difficulties: "One must be humiliated, crushed, and destroyed in order to become a good fertilizing dust for God's glory. Is Our Lord served? Is His service extended?—Yes!—Then all the rest is nothing. The poor *ego* must be the oil of the Eucharistic lamp."

The humility in which he had shrouded his life, he

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kept till death. By divine permission, he went to die at La Mure, far from his Religious family; and when one of his sons, who had hurried to him in his last moments, asked him several times whether he had anything to say, he answered "*No!*" with an air that showed his confidence in God. He had said everything to Our Lord. He died as he had lived, a servitor, without terror, without emotion, his death appearing not his own affair but only God's.

Père Eymard's charming simplicity shone forth in his gentlemanly manners, lending a very special attraction to his presence, and he always preserved the simple tastes of his early education. All who knew him either at Belley, or at La Seyne-sur-Mer, long recalled the famous drum with which he used to assemble the pupils to give them orders, or to announce a walk. His manner of acting in no way hurt his authority among them, for they entertained for him the highest veneration while loving him as a true father.

The difference of social position, the priesthood, the important charges that he fulfilled in the Society of Mary, his titles as Founder of two Religious Congregations made no impression on his upright nature. They did not affect his character in the least. He was always simple, unpretentious, with no self-seeking. We have seen him joyously returning to his native place, where his father had carried on the modest business of oil-presser and taking his place with his sisters at the paternal fireside, as if he had never quitted it. He loved simplicity. In it he lived again the reminiscences of his childhood, and he accepted its poverty.

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His father's house had but two windows in front. His sisters occupied the second story which consisted of one large room on the front and another smaller one looking out on a garden of about 300 metres. This latter room was used as a kitchen, and it contained also the two beds of his sisters. Their reverend brother occupied the front room when he was with them, this room being also the one in which the family took their meals.

Here it was that he died, August 1, 1868, in poverty and privation, far from his Religious family, in abandonment to the Divine Will which called him to another service before the *Throne of the Lamb* where for him Adoration will never cease: "*Et requiem non habebant die ac nocte dicentia: Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus!*"—And they rested not day and night, saying: Holy! Holy! Holy!"

## XVI

### HIS SUPERNATURAL GIFTS.

AS we have already seen, Venerable Père Eymard was privileged by God from his very infancy, prevented by His choicest graces. His soul, as if instinctively, turned toward piety and his interior attraction impelled him toward God. Although from his most tender age he was favored with special gifts of the spiritual order, he used to refer to his ninth year as that of his conversion, for it was at this time that the supernatural lights he received were so great that it seemed to him he then began a new life as if after a conversion.

The Calvary of his native place, La Mure, abounded in dearest remembrances for him. It was there while still very young, he used to go barefoot in the snow to pray in preparation for his First Communion. There was another Calvary that also remained deeply impressed on his memory, for there too he had received signal graces, and that was the Calvary of Saint-Romans d'Isère. One favor from Heaven there bestowed on him was indelibly imprinted in his soul. In a letter to Mme. Jordan, June 5, 1867, he mentioned it indirectly in these words: "For how long a time I have desired to behold again the dear country of Chatte and Saint-Romans!"

We do not forget the favor granted him in his early youth when on a pilgrimage made on foot with his sisters to the shrine of Our Lady of Laus. Worn out with the heat and fatigue of their pious journey,

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his sisters longed for a draught of water. Naturally, none was to be had on the road they were traversing. But Almighty God supplied what was so greatly desired. The boy Pierre Julien found by a hedge a vessel of water from which his sisters slaked their thirst. Our Lady of Laus was not unmindful of her votaries. But the most important, the celestial favor that exercises the greatest influence over his life was the apparition of our Lady of Fourvière at Lyons, January 21, 1851. It was there that he received from the Blessed Virgin the commission to devote himself to the worship and glory of Jesus Sacramental.

Again, on April 19, 1853, after Mass, he made a thanksgiving which lasted two whole hours. It was in that close union with Our Lord that he comprehended that he would have to sacrifice *everything, everything*, even his vocation as a Marist, to devote himself to the Work of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The sanctuary of Our Lady of Laus was one of those he loved most. It recalled the pilgrimages of his early youth, the privileged graces he had then received from his good Mother, the assurance of his sacerdotal, and later that of his religious vocation. There too, besides the foregoing inestimable graces, he received other and more special favors. Of this we are assured by the words he dropped in a familiar instruction. Speaking of that place of pilgrimage which recalled to him so many sweet memories, he forgot himself so far as to say: "*There, one kisses the ground as soon as one sees that magnificent church. And why? . . . Because there the Blessed Virgin is kind, there she is a Mother. There . . . one sees her . . .*" And then he blushed and appeared disconcerted. On

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another occasion in the freedom of intimate conversation, he allowed to escape him some words to the effect that he had seen the Blessed Virgin when at Laus. But suddenly he broke off, saying: "*Oh! I have said too much!*" It was always thought that the Servant of God had been favored by frequent apparitions of Our Lady.

If one of God's servants becomes the object of the exterior assaults of the demon, it is not to be considered a supernatural favor, but does it not show that he who is called upon to endure such attacks is surely a privileged soul, one dear to God, and for that very reason more particularly hated by the infernal enemy? Now, Satan exercised his hatred against Venerable Père Eymard from his earliest years. When only four he felt a hand grasping his throat, as if to strangle him, as we have related elsewhere. Later, toward his ninth or tenth year, when crossing a forest on a pilgrimage to Laus, he was struck by a wicked man whom he met on the way, and who disappeared afterward, leaving the child unable to say which direction he had taken. Some altogether involuntary allusions of the Servant of God made it understood that the demon frequently beat him in his cell, in order to avenge himself for all the good that he was actually doing, as well as that for which he was laying the foundation by the supernatural Works he was so strenuously forwarding.

The Servant of God hid under an exterior of sweet simplicity, the supernatural gifts he had received from God. One of the greatest was his profound intuition as a director of souls. "I hope that after awhile," wrote Mme. G. . . . in August, 1868, "the publica-



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tion of his letters, which I dare compare to those of Saint Francis, will make him appear in this new light. I can declare that no one after having recourse to him could possibly forget him. His words and counsels are forever engraven in the memory and heart. He was truly the man of God speaking with authority and sweetness. He read even the very depths of the soul, and he acknowledged one day to her whom he was pleased to call his 'eldest daughter' that God had granted him the gift of discernment of consciences, but he had suffered so much from it that he begged Our Lord to withdraw it from him.

"He must, indeed, have had much to suffer from it, he who was so upright, so confiding, he who would rather have allowed himself to be deceived frequently than believe in the malice of his fellow-men. The promise God has made us to do the will of those that love Him was accomplished in him to the letter, and he has told us with holy terror that Our Lord granted him all that he asked, and even went beyond his desires, so that he scarcely dared any longer either to desire or to ask anything."

The same lady had written in May, 1868: "I never felt God so near me as when I was listening to Père Eymard. His holiness shone forth in his great simplicity. What a difference between him and other venerable ecclesiastics whom I have known! The latter spoke the language of faith, but *he*—he was the seer, the prophet, who spoke with authority in the name of God and, when he had once spoken, one had no more doubts. It was thus in a few words he settled my vocation. His least word produced its effect. When he told us that God had never refused

him anything, we believed him, and sent up all our petitions through him. Once he exclaimed: "*How good is God! He forestalls my desires. I wanted to see a certain friend, and I met her by chance on the street. She had come over a hundred miles to meet me on my way!*"

Mlle. Marguerite Guillot, his first spiritual daughter (in February and March, 1845), later the first Superioress General of the Congregation of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, attested to the following fact. We reproduce it as she gave it. Many a time the Servants, her spiritual daughters, heard it from her own lips:

"In October, 1844, I lost the enlightened director whom God had given me to guide my conscience. I was greatly afflicted, and I asked Our Lord to be pleased to suffice for me alone. On November 21, of the same year, Feast of the Presentation, in the church of the Charity Hospital at Lyons, during Holy Mass and at the moment of Holy Communion, He said these words to me interiorly: '*Be consoled. I shall soon send thee a more perfect way of obedience.*' I was impressed, but not convinced. I felt an aversion for all interior words, as I feared illusion. My habitual petition to Our Lord was that He would say all that was necessary for me to those that directed me, while leaving me in naked faith and blind obedience.

"One, two, three months passed without any appearance of the accomplishment of these words. See, said I to myself, all imagination! See, how some think they hear, and they hear nothing. . . . I felt humbled at even having had the thought that Our Lord

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had deigned to speak to me. But Our Lord does not deceive. Toward the end of February, 1845, the good Master's promise was realized. The Rev. Père Eymard, then Provincial of the Society of Mary, came to preach the Lent at the Charity Hospital, very near our dwelling. My aged mother could not go to the parish church of Saint Francis de Sales,—so with permission she took up her abode at the *Charity*, which is half-way from the church. From there she attended Père Eymard's instructions. At the end of eight days, she said to me: 'My daughter, I wish you would come to hear my preacher. He is an apostle, he is a *saint*.' . . . I believed my good mother, but what she proposed did not fall in with my wishes, so I told her of my desire to continue the station at our parish church. But she insisted, and I yielded. It was a Tuesday. Père Eymard spoke of the trials of God in a soul, of the means the soul ought to employ in order to make a good use of them, and he ended by saying that trials are always marks of Our Lord's love for us. *How does it happen, said I to myself, that this priest seems to speak for me alone?*

"A sentiment of respect and veneration seized me at the very sight of him, and I thanked the good Master for what I had heard and which was so suited to my needs. Obedience had gained for me that grace. The thought haunted me: What a man of God! How good it would be to open one's heart to him! I decided to do so. O goodness of God, how great thou art! How admirable is Thy love in the pursuit of a soul! What passed in that first interview? Ah! God knows and I, too! All I can say is that Père Eymard

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was for me all that the sun at full midday is to a dark place. He read my soul as through a lens. He told me my life, my interior state, my attraction, my kind of prayer, my trials, God's graces for me, and as yet I had said nothing, I had repeated only the *confiteor*!

"Happy moment, blessed hour! My heart was inundated with joy and gratitude. In my thanksgiving it poured itself out between my good Master and myself. I kept my secret and resolved to profit during Lent by this passing direction, not thinking that Père Eymard resided in Lyons. The Society of Mary was then unknown."

Sister Frances de Chantal de Montagu, the Countess d'Andigne, was under Père Eymard's direction during the last twelve years of his saintly life. In her deposition she says: "I became acquainted with Père Eymard toward the year 1856, when I was residing in Anjou. He had come to see a young man who was ill in our neighborhood. It was there I saw him for the first time and that he invited me to visit him in Paris where I always passed the winter. From that day I saw him from time to time till his death. I resided in *rue du Bac*, and every Thursday I went to his little chapel, *rue Saint Jacques*, to hear his sermon. I confessed to him frequently, and I often saw him in the parlor. We talked on religious subjects and those relating to spiritual direction. When I was in Anjou, he often wrote to me. Many of his letters I have burned, but the thirty-six I still retained, I placed in the hands of a Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament."

"God was pleased to favor her devotion and to increase it by placing her in direct communication with

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that Seraph of the Eucharist, the Venerable Père Eymard." These are the words by which we are introduced to Mademoiselle de Montagu, afterward Mme. the Countess d'Andigné. They refer to the time of her First Communion. The tender love that had always filled her heart for the Most Blessed Sacrament and her insatiable hunger for Holy Communion took on a great increase under his gentle and enlightened guidance. In the midst of the opulence of her Parisian home where she spent her winters, Mme. d'Andigné did not forget her love for the poor. There was one form of charity more dear to her heart than any other, and that was assisting poor religious Communities. Here it was that Père Eymard benefited by her generosity. He had frequent recourse to her for the propagation of his Works, and he asked for the exercise of her charity all the more readily as (saint that he was!) he looked upon Mme. d'Andigné herself as the first beneficiary of it. There was question not only of sums of money, always given freely and generously, but every time that she visited the poor little wooden chapel, the cradle of the Perpetual Adoration inaugurated by the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, the holy Religious would be sure to invite her to be godmother of some vagabond whom he had snatched from evil and instructed, and whom he now wanted to baptize and make an honest man for the good of the Church and society.

This constant exercise of charity brought true joy to Mme. d'Andigné, but her supreme consolation was the Divine Eucharist. She assisted daily at the Holy Sacrifice, although for that she had to rise very early. This cost her, but she did it generously. Thanks to

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the initiative of Père Eymard, who understood the special need of her soul, she obtained permission to have the Blessed Sacrament reserved in her château of l'Isle and Holy Mass celebrated every day. She could then enjoy companionship with Jesus Hostia, which she did as long and as frequently as possible, spending hours at the feet of her Lord.

Venerable Père Eymard gave his penitent an obedience to approach the Divine Banquet every day. "If you should find a priest," he said, "willing to give you Communion several times in the day, do not fail to receive It." That priest, however, was never met. But the insistence of the holy director conquered the fear of the otherwise obedient soul. Longing for Holy Communion every day, the luxury of her surroundings troubled her. Père Eymard knew that nothing could more effectually help her than daily Communion, and from that time he was faithfully obeyed. She braved everything rather than lose that visit of her Lord, she was ingenious in overcoming every obstacle. Before daylight, if necessary, she was up and, carefully stilling the rustling of her silken robes, presenting herself at some confessional where at that early hour were found only servants and workmen. "My daughter," said a good priest to her one morning, "you are out at service?" Radiant with happiness, she answered: "Yes, Father, in the service of the good God."

Père Eymard's direction, firm and gentle, sustained her under the numerous discouragements arising from the forced worldliness of her position. In her last years she was called upon to depose in the informative Process instituted for the Cause of the Servant of

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God. In several touching pages she recorded her spiritual relations with the Reverend Father of her soul and the prediction that he made of her entrance into religion. This writing, addressed to the Superior General of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament, we shall give at length as more exact, more eloquent than any abridgment could be. We shall suppress nothing, for it has the double advantage of making the Venerable Father known as well as the writer herself:

“My very dear Reverend Father,

“I have deferred answering your letter, because I listened to my self-love, not my false humility, as you have been pleased to call it. I felt the impossibility of faithfully expressing what I retain in my heart and soul more than in my memory.

“I shall write you what I can recall, and of which I can declare the truth:

“Being very ill with diphtheria, the good and holy Père Eymard came to see me, and to him I confided my terror of death and judgment. He knew well the troubles of my soul, and he replied to me with his smile of goodness and innocence, lit up by a heavenly ray which was always reflected in the souls of his hearers: ‘No, no, my dear Madame, you will not die. The good God loves your soul too much to take it from under silk curtains.’

“Another time, confessing to the good Father, I accused myself of all my useless expenses as extravagance and indulgence of fancies. He saw my trouble and anxiety. Then with his compassionate kindness, he asked: ‘Do you keep an account of what you spend?’ and he added: ‘Bring me the book. I want to see everything.’ I confess to you, Father, that this



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penance was far more humiliating than any other he could have given me. After some very timid little objections, I obeyed. On receiving that book of *abjection*, he said to me: 'I shall return it to you in a few days.' I went for it punctually. On giving it back to me, he said: 'Look upon what is in it as pardoned. Now be at peace.'

"Many a time I felt convinced that the good God enlightened the saintly Father with supernatural vision on the true state of my soul. One day among others confessing with my usual trouble, he allowed me to go on without interrupting me. When I had finished, he said: 'You have spoken sincerely, but with no knowledge of yourself. I am going to show you the truth.' Then, Reverend Father, he told me as if he had read it in a book, all that made me suffer and that was bad in me. You know well, Father, his penetrating glance which made one understand that, while one was speaking to him, he already knew what one was going to say. This impression was so supernatural that one day, having taken with me a little girl between ten and twelve years old, I received from her this reply to the slight reprimand that I gave her for looking sulky when even good Père Eymard spoke to her or noticed her: 'Oh! I do not like people who see inside of a body!'

"This good Father had for my soul the most delicate solicitude and compassion full of divine charity. He understood what it suffered and what it had still to suffer. So, knowing by true presentiment that his death was near, he wrote me to meet him at . . . when on his journey to his sister's at La Mure. I obeyed, and I can repeat his words at that interview

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exactly: 'I told you to come, for I am going to hear your confession for the last time. I want to leave you in peace. Confess all in your life that has given you trouble and anxiety, all that may be to you a painful remembrance or impression. I am going to give you absolution for your whole life, that you may leave the past behind you without ever returning to it.' 'I think,' he said to me again, 'that I am going to die, and that I am hearing your confession and talking to you for the last time. I have never asked you anything for myself, but to-day I am going to implore a charity of you which I beg you not to forget. As soon as you hear of my death, have fifty Masses said for me. So many priests go to purgatory for not having said the Masses engaged of them for the deliverance of the souls in purgatory. I may have forgotten some myself. People often give Mass intentions in the parlor at times when one is occupied or distracted. I depend on you to do me this great charity.' I regret not being able to recall more of that interview, for he kept me a long time. The impression is still very lively in my soul. But I have no words to express without taking away the perfume of holiness, truth, and heavenly goodness, the way in which he gave me his blessing, the last on this earth, but which was to assure to me all those that he would send me from the height of heaven."

Venerable Père Eymard's spirit of prophecy was not at fault, for the writer of the above, five years after his blessed demise, entered the second Monastery of the Visitation, Paris. There she spent the last years of her life near the tabernacle, near Jesus Hostia whom she had loved from childhood, and

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whom the Venerable Père Eymard had taught her to know and love ever more and more.

Rev. Père Mayet, in the notes that he left upon the Life of the Servant of God, records the following fact:

“A lady of good family, who was endowed with eminent piety, was overwhelmed by extraordinary trials. She was hampered in the way of perfection by the direction of a Religious who, instead of giving her wings to fly, bound her, so to speak, in a net. Still more, although absent a great part of the year, he had in a manner imposed secrecy upon her, as was formerly done to Saint de Chantal before her meeting with Saint Francis de Sales. It so happened that Père Eymard met this lady and doubtless, moved by an inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he said on accosting her: *‘I am bringing you the liberty of the children of God.’*

“This unexpected salutation so suited to her case, brought with it a ray of light and a stroke of grace. Chained by her secret obedience however, she made no overture, and the conversation took another turn. They were talking on indifferent subjects, though edifying, when Père Eymard suddenly said: *‘But the good God has certainly sent me here for something, and you are telling me nothing!’* This second assault at once opened the gate of the citadel. Père Eymard cut the chains that had impeded the flight of that soul, drew up for her the rule of conduct she was to follow, gave her his care for some time and, with God’s help, established her in such a state of peace, of interior well-being, of spiritual detachment, of religious liberty, of renunciation

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of persons and things in God alone and for God alone, that it seemed to her she had been released from purgatory and elevated by the saintly director into an atmosphere of pure love.

"She afterward said that the first time she had met him (for before that memorable visit, she had seen him for a few moments), he had made on her an impression of grace which lasted all day. He became an angel of God for her whole household—from the lackeys and the maids to the grandparents, the governesses, the children,—all wanted to open their heart to him. He established the reign of divine love and of sacrifice through love where he had found along with sincere love and heroic sacrifice: much servility and many false ideas."

M. l'abbé Maillet, chaplain of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, sent the following deposition made by Mlle. Josephine Oddou, of La Mure:

"One of the aunts of Mlle. Creux, the god-daughter of Père Eymard, and who was named Josephine Creux, being once on a pilgrimage to Laus, Père Eymard himself being in the company, went to confession to him. She was not a little surprised when, although she had said nothing about her practices of piety, Père Eymard spoke to her about the subject she generally took for her meditation, and told her to vary it."

"Sister Camille of the Blessed Sacrament, a Religious of the Congregation of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, died in their House of Paris, in which she had discharged the office of dispenser, or what we may term housekeeper. She attested to the following fact, her deposition being received by the aforementioned M. l'abbé Maillet:

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"It was in 1865. Père Eymard had come to Angers. When it was known that he was in the city, the whole quarter was in movement, and a large number of people came to our chapel to assist at his Mass. I communicated at it, and during my thanksgiving, I had a most extraordinary thought about him. But I returned to the convent without thinking any more of it. That evening, having presented myself in the parlor with several ladies, he told me to come apart a little that he wanted to speak to me. I did so, and he said: '*You had such and such a thought this morning,*' and he mentioned the very thought that I had had. Being very timid, I merely bowed without saying a word, but I said to myself on retiring: *Ah! then, Père Eymard knows my thoughts.*"

Mlle. Philip (in religion, Sister Julie Philomène of the Blessed Sacrament) attests as follows:

"I declare and certify that what I say is true. On March 18, 1868, after my confession for my taking the habit, which I made to Père Eymard, our Founder, he said to me two things that no one could know, on the state of my soul. It was the first time that I had confessed to him, and our Father said what was very true. I saw that he read my soul."

We shall now touch upon the remarkable intuition possessed by the Servant of God with regard to souls.

Sister Marie of the Blessed Sacrament (Mlle. de Boisgrollier), one of the first Religious of the Congregation of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament, related the following facts:

"The state of certain souls was known to him. He knew, for instance, that such or such a soul whom he

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had left calm three days before was then in suffering, and the nature of that suffering.

"I happened to have urgent need of speaking to him but, not daring to go to the parlor, I went into the church, although it was neither the day nor the hour that he was accustomed to come there. Nevertheless, I saw him enter, and he thus addressed me: '*I have been at work. But something told me that you were here and that you wanted me. What is it?*'—As I showed my astonishment and was thanking God, he said to me: "*That happens to me sometimes.*"

The same thing happened to Mlle. B. de M., who wanted to become a Religious, but whose father was opposed to her project. He took her to one of the most celebrated Curés of Paris, but it did not bring peace to the poor child. Happily, her aunt, Mme. G. . . . was in Paris. She said to her: "Come, consult Père Eymard." The distance was great, and they would have to go quickly and secretly. And oh, what a disappointment when the Brother Porter told them that Père Eymard was at Adoration and could not be disturbed! The two ladies entered the chapel feeling sad enough. But almost at the same instant Père Eymard rose from his *prie-Dieu*, and came toward them. "*Mon Père*, we wish to speak to you." "*Yes, I felt that some one wanted me.*" He entered the confessional, and there told Edmée that she should not consecrate herself to God, but remain with her father. Peace at once succeeded to her trouble, proving to her that the latter course was indeed the divine will.

The Servant of God sometimes had extraordinary presentiments. One day, at Lyons, between the years 1844 and '46, a Brother went unknown to him to

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make a charcoal fire in the sacristy of the chapel of the Third Order, which was very damp. Having imprudently shut the door, he inhaled the fumes and soon fell to the ground asphyxiated and motionless. Père Eymard was in his room writing, but he felt urged to go down to the chapel. He rose, took some steps, and then looking on it as an idle and useless desire, he returned and sat down again to his writing. But again he was urged to go down, and this time more strongly. He obeyed and descended to the chapel. The door of the sacristy was closed, and he saw no one. "What a trifle I am!" he said. "For what have I come here?" He prayed an instant before returning, and then the thought came to him to open the sacristy door. He did so, found the Brother lying on the ground, drew him out, and saved him. A little later, he would have been lifeless.

Another time, at Lyons also, the thought came to him to go and open the door of the apartments. There he found the Master of Novices, who had been surprised by a hemorrhage, in great need of assistance.

Again, a lady who had the intention of writing a letter of courtesy, but which would have been used for other ends, as she afterward understood, came to assist at Père Eymard's Mass in his chapel at Paris. When she was leaving, she saw him. He approached her and said: "*Do not write the letter you intend to write.*" His words amazed her, for she hardly knew Père Eymard, and she had mentioned her intention to no one.

Sometimes the Servant of God uttered prophetic words. Several years before the event, he made a prophecy which was realized in every point and under circumstances which could not have been foreseen.



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A pupil of the College of Chartes, the son of a lady whom Père Eymard highly esteemed, came to see him in Paris at the faubourg Saint-Jacques. He tells the following fact:

“Père Eymard said to me one day a little abruptly and without any connection with the subject of our conversation:: *‘A revolution is near. It will be terrible. In spite of themselves young men will be enrolled in the ranks of the rebels. If you are in Paris at the time, seek refuge in our house which will be spared.’* I was astonished at these precise details. One might, assuredly, without being a prophet, foresee the fall of the Empire and even a revolution. But there was more than that in Père Eymard’s assertions.”

This conversation took place at the close of 1866, or at the latest, in the early months of 1867. The war and the revolution happened only 1870-71. The residence of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament at this time was 8, *rue Leclerc*, in the faubourg Saint-Jacques. This house was spared although in the thick of the fight both during the siege of Paris and the horrors of the Commune. Bullets fell in the garden of the house, which was guarded by a body of Communards. The Religious continued to expose the Most Blessed Sacrament as usual. They suffered only from the want felt throughout the famished city. Every morning some Religious Sisters at Montrouge sent them what was necessary for the day.

In 1880, at the time of the Decrees of expulsion of French Religious, the Divine protection was again evident in a very special manner over the Mother-House of Paris, 23 Avenue Friedland, which then possessed the body of the holy Founder.

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Forty-eight hours before the execution of the decrees, some persons belonging to the Spanish settlement interposed and obtained through the intervention of the Spanish ambassador, who was then the Marquis de Molins, that the chapel of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament should not be closed, although all the other churches belonging to Religious were placed under seal. Here, again, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament continued in our chapel of Paris without interruption.

Another prediction of Père Eymard, made to the Foundress of the Dominicanesses of Sevres, was realized. Trials such as are encountered at the beginning of all Religious Congregations, were besetting their recent foundation, and they were such that all appeared to point to a vexatious delay. Père Eymard was at the time their ecclesiastical Superior, and to him they made known their apprehensions. His reply was: "*Make the Adoration, and you will not perish.*"

The counsel was followed. The little Community consecrated themselves to the Blessed Sacrament, pledging themselves to daily Adoration. From that moment, every hour of the day saw one of the Sisters come in the name of all to supplicate Our Lord for strength and consolation. Little by little, their difficulties disappeared, and blessings from Heaven soon proved that Père Eymard's prediction was realized.

The Foundress of the Congregation of Thanksgiving, (Morbihan), was known to Père Eymard at Lyons, in 1851. He knew her great attraction for Our Lord, her ardent desire to consecrate her life to Thanksgiving toward the Blessed Sacrament, and he assured her that her idea would be realized. "*Hold on to your idea, for it will be realized. . . . you will*

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*one day be the Foundress of this Work, which is from God. But what tribulations, what sufferings await you. . . as myself! . . .”*

Tribulations and sufferings did indeed fall upon her for long years, and the Work was abandoned. But as soon as Père Eymard died, difficulties were smoothed away more or less, the Work was founded, and it now goes on in silence and gratitude for the divine protection and favors lavished upon it.

Not only were gifts of extraordinary intuition and prophecy accorded the Servant of God, but to them was added the gift of healing. The reverend Mère Marguerite recounts the following fact, which happened to herself:

“In 1865,” she says, “I was attacked by spinal trouble. For three weeks I could not move. M. l’Abbé Crépon, then Curé of Our Lady of Angers, came to hear my confession on October 23d. I told him that Père Eymard had arrived in Angers the day before, and that he had told me I must be cured on Saint Raphael’s day. M. Crépon replied: ‘If you go to Mass to-morrow, I shall say Père Eymard is a saint.’ But I had faith in obedience. My dear daughters clothed me in my habit. Sister Virginie and Sister Isabelle supported me under the arms to the chapel. I was obliged to remain seated the whole time of Mass, even at the Elevation. When the moment of Communion came, Sister Virginie supported me to the Holy Table.

“After Communion, I made a sign to her to go, and I returned alone to my place. I was cured. Père Eymard paused an instant in giving Holy Communion, saying to himself: *‘It is done! the favor is obtained!’*

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"After Holy Mass, I went to the sacristy to receive his blessing. He said to me: '*The good God is so good! He grants when we ask with faith.*' I assisted at his breakfast, and resumed my ordinary occupations. Sister Emilie of the Blessed Sacrament, who was present, attested the fact and gave a written deposition, April 24, 1898."

Sister Jeanne of the Blessed Sacrament was cured by the touch of Père Eymard's hand. She relates the fact in the following words: "I, Sister Jeanne, the daughter, although unworthy of our Venerable Founder, declare that I was cured by him. In 1865, when I had a very severe pain in one eye, he told me to consult a physician. I replied: *Mon Père, you yourself are going to cure me.* . . . He laid his hand on my sore eye for some instants and, when he withdrew it, the trouble had completely disappeared."

Sister Marie of the Blessed Sacrament likewise was cured by the Servant of God. She was one of the first Religious of the Congregation of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament and assisted at the foundation. Through love and devotedness for her Religious family, she spent a part of her nights in writing and laboring for the Congregation. In 1866, her sight grew so weak as to threaten total blindness. Then her faith in the sanctity of Père Eymard led her to address herself to him for a cure in confidence and simplicity. His reply was: "*Come after my Mass. That is the time that I am powerful.*"

"I went eagerly," she tells us. "Our good Father blessed me, he prayed, and I understood what he said in Latin: '*May these eyes cease not to see!*' From

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that moment my sight strengthened, and I never again feared its loss." Sister Marie continued to write till the end of her life, which happened in 1877.

Venerable Père Eymard frequently made use of the oil from the sanctuary lamp before the Most Blessed Sacrament to effect cures. "*Remember*," he used to say, "*that this little lamp has never failed to cure those that have been anointed with its oil.*"

Brother Charles Richerd, who discharged in the House of Paris the duty of porter, for many long years, says:

"Very often I saw Père Eymard blessing the oil of the Blessed Sacrament, and by it he obtained numerous cures. His chapel of Saint-Jacques he used to call *the chapel of miracles*, on account of the multiplied cures and conversions he there effected."

In 1865, Père Eymard's own sister fell dangerously ill, but she did not notify her brother. Père Eymard soon arrived however, and thus addressed her: "*My dear sister, I have come to see you, for Saint Michael gave me to understand that you are ill.*"

During this illness of his sister, he visited Our Lady of Laus in company with Mme. Gras, to whom he related the following incidents:

First, he told her that he had been beaten. He said: "*It was not human beings who beat me. The blows fell thick as hail.*"

"Then it was the devil?" she said.

"*Ah! surely!*" he replied.

Secondly, he told Mme. Gras that one day, having not a *sou* left, he went to the chapel and said to the Blessed Virgin: "*But we can not die of hunger!*" And he heard a voice, saying to him: "Do not worry

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yourself, go to your work," and he found in his pocket a number of gold pieces. "*I was very sure however,*" he said, "*that I had none before.*"

When at Laus, Père Eymard asked for some oil and, returning to his sister, who was still very ill, he knelt down at the foot of the bed, saying: "*Sister, we are going to begin a Novena,*" Then he anointed her stomach with the oil, for up to that time her vomiting and perspiration were incessant, and making the Sign of the Cross, he said: "*Sœur Benoîte of Laus, intercede with the Blessed Virgin for me.*"

"That same evening," says his sister, "the floods of perspiration and the vomiting ceased entirely." From that moment she grew better and better. The following year, the Servant of God made another pilgrimage to Laus in thanksgiving.

## XVII

### HIS RENOWN FOR SANCTITY DURING LIFE.

AT every period of life, from childhood to the time of his premature death, Père Eymard was spoken of as a saint by all who had any relations with him. The reputation for sanctity clung to him, nor could he escape from it. His childhood companions, his fellow-students at the seminary, his confrères in the parochial ministry and in the Religious life, and lastly, the Faithful—all venerated him as a saint. At Chatte, at Monteynard, at Belley, at Lyons, in the Third Order of Mary, at La Seyne, at Paris where he laid the foundation of his Congregations,—everywhere he spread the "*bonus odor Christi*—the good odor of Christ."

In childhood he combined all the virtues which, at a later period, were to cause him to be regarded as a saint. He was very good, very submissive to his parents, very gentle toward every one. Mothers used to hold him up as a model for their children. "Why," they would say, "why are you not like little Julien?"

His precocious qualities permitted him even then to exercise a certain ascendancy among his companions, which became a real apostolate. They were all filled with "veneration" for him, according to the expression of the former friends of his childhood. Even his general bearing gave edification. At school he was exemplary, very gay, very candid, charitable, and of extraordinary simplicity. Even in the *Grand Séminaire* he was absolutely ignorant of evil.



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One of the contemporaries of Père Eymard at La Mure, Mlle. Condrant, who made her First Communion with him, testifies to his great fervor at that period. The Abbé Second, Curé of La Mure, did not spare himself when preparing his children for First Communion. Referring to the occasion mentioned above, he remarked: "More than once little Julien shed tears in abundance on hearing my instructions and exhorted his young companions to do the same. But they replied that they could not weep as he did."

We have already spoken of his first aspirations toward the Holy Eucharist, of his desires for the priesthood, his exceptional piety, his charity toward the poor, and of his sister's veneration for him—indications which led one to foretell what he would one day be if he remained faithful to those happy presages.

The gentle and modest child could still be seen in him in his early manhood, nor were his virtues less conspicuous for a single instant. All the time remaining to him after his prescribed duties was given to study. Sometimes, knowing the opposition of his parents, his young companions rallied him with "You want to be a priest" (for he always expressed his desire for it) "and you have not yet begun Latin." The boy kept silence, counting on the good God, who knows so well how to supply all that is needful for us.

Although bantering the boy, his young friends were sincerely regretful that his studies could not be commenced, and several among them also expressed the same desire for the priesthood. But the others, like little judges and prophets, pointing to Julien would reply: "Yes, he will. But you others. . . ." Such was the appreciation of children of his own age. His

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modesty was never impaired. He was calm, humble, and retiring. During the vacations, which he spent at La Mure, his presence alone commanded respect. "When he was with us," remarked one of his old companions, "he made no disturbance, but we were no longer the same, we had to restrain ourselves. His presence commanded it."

"At the *Grand Séminaire*," we are told, "he was pious, gay, a good adviser, a good scholar, and a true apostle."

The reputation for sanctity which surrounded the Servant of God during his seminary life at Grenoble followed him to Chatte, of which he was named Vicar some months after his ordination to the priesthood.

Mlle. Sophie Ferrouil, who was a scholar in the Convent of Providence, at Chatte, at the time when the Abbé Eymard was Vicar, said of him: "The Vicar of Chatte had just begun his career in the ministry, and already he was looked upon as a saint. His sermons were very enthusiastically attended. Attracted by his great reputation, a Protestant lady lost not one of his Lenten discourses. I can still recall his angular face so full of goodness, simplicity, and holiness. It is engraven on my memory. I feel sure that some day the Holy Church will permit us to honor him on her altars."

At Monteynard he spent a great part of his day in the church. He gave everything to the poor. To save a half-crown, his sisters had to hide it. Even the soutane he wore was not his own, but a borrowed one. His only dream at the time was to go on the Foreign Missions, if his health had permitted, or to become a Religious in a Society consecrated to Mary, for whom he always had an angelic devotion."

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Another, Mme. V. Pierre Eymery, of Monteynard, recalling her childhood reminiscences, said: "Père Eymard, who was then our Curé, guided and directed my life. When he gave us instruction in Catechism, one would have thought it was Our Lord Himself teaching His Apostles. No one stirred. He did not mount the pulpit, but walked up and down our ranks questioning us. All paid close attention to what he said. On Sunday, he gave catechetical instructions at the end of Vespers, or rather before the *Magnificat*. The parents and friends assisted at them. On that day he mounted the pulpit, the better to preach to his parishioners. Every one loved and venerated him as a saint.

"The first time that as Curé he had First Communion in his parish, he mounted the pulpit in the afternoon, but he could not speak, tears stifled his voice, so he received all and every one of us into the Holy Rosary. He gave all that he had to the poor. He never troubled himself about material things.

"He had with him at this time his sister Marianne. I went often to see her, and several times she said to me: '*My brother is a beautiful soul! I have been to him a mother. I reared him.*' She entertained for him a real veneration and she told me how, while only a very young child, he used to gather the little ones of his own age to instruct them in Catechism and teach them how to pray. His childhood was very pure, his piety very zealous. He saw to the spiritual welfare of his little companions and lead them to good. While still very young, he made the pilgrimage to Our Lady of Laus alone."

Already an object of veneration for all during his

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parochial ministry, the Servant of God soon shed around the good odor of his virtues on entering the Society of Mary. We have already made mention of this in a former chapter. The Abbé Bobillon, chaplain of Notre-Dame des Gardes, and an old pupil of Belley, wrote as follows to M. l'Abbé Maillet, the Almoner of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament: "Of your pious and excellent Founder, I retain one or two impressions shared in by all my fellow students of Belley. In the first place, the appellation of *Father*, so difficult to divest one of, but so flattering to him who receives it from a thousand lips—when there was question among us of the other priests of the house, we used to say M. such or such a one, for example, M. Marcel, M. Germain, M. Aimant, etc. But I never heard any one call our holy Director anything but 'Père Eymard.'"

"Again, and by this trait one might already be able to recognize the pious Founder *in fieri* of the devout Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. Whenever we were with him, whether he was presiding in the Chapel, hearing our confessions, or preaching to us, or above all when at recreation we were in his band, we were not only charmed, but holily ravished. I do not think I make a mistake in comparing the sentiment that possessed us to that which burned in the hearts of the disciples of Emmaus: '*Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis, dum loqueretur in via?*' Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke xxiv, 32.)

Père Mayet also said: "Père Eymard was an angelic soul. I understood that on seeing him at Belley.

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From the beginning of his religious life, I saw that he was a saint. I at once began to take notes of him, and continued to do so for many years."

M.L., the Canon Honorary of Belley, said of the Servant of God: "Père Eymard's reputation for piety, for sanctity had cleared the boundaries of the College, and was very soon spread throughout the city of Belley. The priests confided to him the most difficult cases."

The Servant of God never slackened his pace in the way of holiness, never relented in the way of perfection. Walking with an alert step, prompt to respond to the movements of grace, he was preparing—though without knowing it—for one of the most beautiful missions God can confide to one predestined by His love.

Among the Reverend Marist Fathers, also, Père Eymard enjoyed the reputation for sanctity. Père Touche, nephew of the Missionary Apostolic, told the Abbé Maillet: "Père Eymard is regarded as a saint among us Marists."

He was so well known at Lyons that the veneration he inspired once saved his life. It happened in 1848. During the insurrection, the insurgents seized Père Eymard, shouting: "*The priest to the Rhone!*" But soon recognizing him, full of respect for his person, they released him, saying: "*He does too much good in our city of Lyons!*"

Madame Adam, of Lyons, regarded Père Eymard as a saint. She says: "He came to Fourvière to give us some Conferences, and we had very great confidence in him. Whenever a Conference from Père Eymard was announced to us, we regarded it as a

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great favor. He gave us several which we preserved among our manuscripts. Among others there were some on prayer, the trials of the soul, conformity to the will of God. He had a real predilection for our Community. He said he found in it a spirit of silence and recollection that assured the religious life."

At the Sacred Heart of Chartreux, Lyons, the Reverend Mère Angèle of the Sacred Heart held Père Eymard in the highest estimation. "I was persuaded," she declared, "*that he was a saint and a great saint. There was in him a reflection of Our Lord.*" Since her entrance into the Sacred Heart she had known him through one of her sisters who belonged to the Third Order of Mary and who was directed by him. This sister frequently spoke to her of him and always with the veneration one feels for the saints. After having made a private Retreat under the direction of the Servant of God, she had written down all the exercises, which were so beautiful, and given them to Mère Angèle to be used in the Retreats of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart. They have at the Sacred Heart of Chartreux all the writings of Père Eymard, and the Sisters make constant use of them."

When the Abbé Maillet, almoner of the *Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament*, was about to write the *Life* of Mère Marguerite, he went to Lyons and its surroundings to collect documents relative to it. While doing so, he frequently heard Père Eymard spoken of. He wrote in his diary: "I am struck at finding among all whom I meet the same appreciation of Père Eymard. They retain of him the sweetest remembrance. They exclaim: '*Oh, he was extraordinarily holy! What holy direction! What touching counsels!*'"

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*What love of the good God in his last words! What kindness! What zeal! What an ascetic countenance!*

"Père Eymard was looked upon as a preacher full of heart, whose favorite subjects were those on the interior life. He had also a very great reputation as a director of souls."

The old church of La Mure has above its portal a very spacious tribune reserved for the *Penitents of the Blessed Sacrament*. They chant there the Office on Sunday morning and make adoration every third Sunday of the month. Père Eymard greatly modified the Statutes of the Confraternity, above all in regard to the worship of the Blessed Sacrament. He was a saint, and a saint always does good wherever he goes. He did much at La Mure by his example and also by his sweet instructions. His zeal was that of the saints, and he exercised it everywhere not forgetting his native city. Scarcely had he arrived there, when his sister's house was invaded by visitors, all eager to see him, to speak to him, to ask his advice. If he yielded to the Curé's invitation to preach, the church was sure to be filled with men of all classes. Even libertines were not absent, they who had declared in the public saloon at the time of a Jubilee: "If Père Eymard preaches it, he will surely convert us." Some notorious characters, who never practised their religion, said to Mlle. Eymard: "If we had a priest like Père Eymard, we would all go to confession." And, in fact, one of them had refused every priest. But when Père Eymard went to La Mure, he made his confession to him. He afterward said: "To others, never would I confess!"

Nothing, perhaps, proves more strongly the sanctity



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of Père Eymard than the veneration in which he was held in his native country. Did not Our Lord say that no one is a prophet in his own country? But for Père Eymard this proverb no longer holds good.

As soon as he arrived at La Mure, the doorways were decorated, his coach was surrounded—it was an event. Descending from the coach, he embraced all the men. One of them, a Protestant and an inn-keeper, dared not approach him. But he going up to him with the words: “Ah, well! you, you do not want to embrace me?”—“I dare not,” was the reply. And Père Eymard clasped him in his arms.

A poor sick man, a Catholic who had been reared among Protestants, could not make his confession, watched as he was by the Protestant deaconess, who kept a close eye on him. The poor fellow said: “Ah! if Père Eymard were here! he would hear my confession, and my nurse would never be able to hinder it!”

His memory still lives at La Mure as elsewhere. He loved his native country, and he was loved in it.

In Paris, Père Eymard’s reputation for holiness was great, but after the foundation of his two Congregations, that of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament and that of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, it increased.

“As high virtue always attracts by the perfume it exhales, Père Eymard’s reputation for holiness spread rapidly in Paris. . . . They ran to him from all sides, they called him the second Curé d’Ars,” so writes Père Mayet. “We received a letter from a person of high spirituality who gave him that title. They begged to consult him on important questions upon

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which they could not themselves decide. One letter said: "Ordinary prudence falls very short in an affair like this. We can not act with any degree of security without one of those supernatural lights which God often communicates to His saints. They say he is becoming a second Curé d'Ars. He gives me not a sign of life. Perhaps, he is on the highroad of those saints that never reply . . . etc."

"Seeing that the Founder of the Society of the Most Blessed Sacrament enjoyed in Paris special and extraordinary consideration, to which no priest of the Capital attained at this epoch (M. Desgenettes was dead), we took the liberty to say to this venerated friend in 1863: 'There is something makes a deep impression on the most thoughtful among us Marists, those most united to God, and that appears to us a divine confirmation, an approbation of your Work. Usually a certain discredit attaches to a Religious who quits his Society, and justly, because ordinarily there are some reasons for it. But for you it is not so, and we see you still enjoying a certain consideration.'

"He blushed. *'Too much, too much!'* he replied. *'You can not figure to yourself all who come into this house, priests, laymen, the great of the world. It is a sacrifice. I leave my room in the morning, and I do not return to it all day.'* Then he added with that fraternal simplicity which shed a charm over all our intercourse: *'But I am very independent. I never leave our Adorations or our exercises, and so they have to wait whole hours, and we are at the end of the world. Ah, well! for those that weary themselves out, so much the worse. One day a titled person came and addressing himself to one of ours (a*

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*Brother) asked him when I should have finished my Adoration. He found that he would have to wait a long time. 'But,' said the visitor to him, 'go tell him my name.' 'Ah! Monsieur,' replied the Brother, 'you are not yet so grand a lord for Père Eymard to leave the Blessed Sacrament for you! You do not know what the Blessed Sacrament is.' Our good Brother appeared triumphant when relating the above.'"*

The Venerable Curé d'Ars said of the Servant of God: "Père Eymard is a *saint*. The world thwarts his Work. It does not know it. That Work will procure much glory to God. Adoration by *priests*! Oh, how beautiful! Say to the good Père Eymard all that one can say when one sees himself among friends, and when we see one another in heaven. I shall pray every day for the Work."

One day when Père Eymard went to see him and commend to him that same Work, the holy Curé said: "You want me to pray for the Work? But I would spoil everything! We spoil all—we ourselves. . . . Why do you doubt of its success?—*It is He!*"—(Our Lord Himself!)

The holy Curé used to call our Père Eymard "*My saint*," and he had himself affiliated to the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

The reputation for sanctity which followed the Servant of God during life had no other origin than his own personal holiness and his heroic exercise of all the virtues. No one ever tried to rouse this reputation for sanctity, and no step was ever taken to diffuse it among the different classes of society. Of itself it increased in proportion as the extraordinary and heroic virtue of the Apostle of the Eucharist became known.

## XVIII

### THE PRECIOUS DEATH OF THE SERVANT OF GOD.

Toward the close of the year 1867 and the beginning of 1868, Père Eymard had to endure trials of all kinds, which were for him a real martyrdom. They placed on his brow the crown of thorns and perfected his likeness to the Saviour, his Divine Model.

"We had the happiness," writes Père Mayet, "to see Père Eymard in Paris, April, 1868. He opened his heart to us. '*This time,*' he said, '*I am crushed under the Cross, overthrown, annihilated.*' Never before had we seen him in such a state, never before had he so expressed himself. In the midst of such desolation, his heart felt the need of seeking relief from that of a friend, as Our Lord had deigned to do in the Garden of Olives through compassion for our weakness. . . . '*in as much,*' he added, '*as in order not to frighten or discourage my confrères, I am obliged to bear my cross alone.*'

"Among the trials that were overwhelming him, there were some very delicate ones. Certain difficulties were of a nature to occasion him frightful confusion and over one of his principal Houses hung episcopal menaces which might entail its ruin. Some one was unmercifully pursuing him, bent at all hazards on giving rise to scandal. He was ridiculed by another, as many well knew. A bookseller with whom he had placed sixty or seventy thousand francs, failed at the very moment when he had need of that sum

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to face his inextricable embarrassments. We can not enumerate all the causes of chagrin that tore his soul. I said to him: Never have I had so much hope as I have to-day for the Eucharistic Work, for I had not yet beheld you crucified. This is a good omen!

"He earnestly implored me to pray for him. But what touched me deeply was that he had not a bitter word nor complaint against those that were thus pursuing him. He even took up the defence of one who wanted to raise scandal on account of it, attributing it all to the weakness of his mind. One might have thought him a lamb under the hand of the striker."

At this period Our Lord gave a warning to Père Eymard through a lady of the world of exceptional piety. She said to him: "*Let Père Eymard not ask his deliverance in this world, for he shall not have it. God has placed his incredible sorrow and embarrassment in my heart. I feel what he is suffering, and it is the hour of great sufferings.*" She added: "*He must suffer because he is the father. Let him remember that he offered himself as a victim! As he did it with all his heart, Jesus has fully accepted it. The more he suffers, the more he will help his young Society. It is for it that he is suffering and that God has permitted those trials and humiliations.*"

To this were added the following remarkable words: "*I see above his head, as it were, a door through which he has to pass. The nearer he approaches it, the narrower it becomes. It is always growing narrower. Tell him about it, he ought to know it.*"

Another time the same person said to him: "*The disciple is not above the Master.*" Shortly after, the

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little gate, against which the cross leaned more and more, opened suddenly before him, and our very dear and highly venerated Père Eymard, that friend, that brother, that priest beloved of God and men, that fervent servitor of Mary, that ardent apostle of Jesus Hostia, that *saint*, breathed his last sigh, on Saturday, August 1st, 1868, the Feast of Saint Peter's Chains, the eve of the Feast of Our Lady of the Angels.

Everything leads to the belief that Père Eymard had a presentiment, if not the assured knowledge of his approaching end.

On February 1, 1868, returning from Marseilles, he passed through La Mure. For the Feast of the following day, he said to his sister: "*Take the most beautiful candle that you can find.*" She little thought that it would burn for himself at his death some months later.

His sisters said to him: "Come back more frequently, but not during the winter." "*I shall return sooner than you think,*" was the reply. Five months later, he went home to them to die.

In March, 1868, he made a journey to Nantes expressly to see Mme. de Grandville, to settle her conscience, to relieve her of her past doubts, to act toward her as to one whom he would never see again.

In July, he left Paris for Vichy there to see Mère Marguerite and give her his last counsels and blessing. There he met also Mme. Gourd and her daughter, to whom he addressed these beautiful words which may be applied so well to himself:

"*Would you like me to give you a sign by which one may know whether or not one loves God? It is when one has great trials and does not ask to be delivered from them.*"

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In passing through Lyons, Père Eymard saw Mme. Franchet and spoke to her some very grave and solemn words upon the spirit of penance. It was like a warning. She had been greatly disturbed, and she asked herself whether she had really seen Père Eymard, or whether it was a supernatural apparition, so solemn and majestic was his air.

The Countess d'Andigny received his visit at Paris as a kind of farewell. In her confession he gave her the most opportune counsels for the future. . . . On March 2, 1868, he wrote from Paris to Mme. Jordan: "Fifty-eight years, dear daughter, behold us at the eleventh hour! Ah! if the dial of life could turn back to the first hours of this life, how much more supernatural we should be! But we must be satisfied with the hours that remain in order to arrive at the noonday of eternity!"

On March 13, 1868, to the Countess d'Andigny, he wrote: "What happiness to have made one's journey and to have arrived at the gate of one's fatherland! How many things I should have to say to you! *I have been thinking a little that the needle of my life is going to stop. What faults to repair! What duties to discharge well!*"

To Mme. Jordan, May 19, 1868, he wrote, and it was the last letter she received from him: ". . . Adieu, good and dear daughter! We are growing old. We must make good use of the light that illumines the end of our journey. This thought struck me this morning in my Adoration. We are coming near to the end of our journey of life, and we are still amusing ourselves with the nothings of this world!"

Have we not here sufficient indication of his pre-



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sentiments of approaching death? What is absolutely certain is that he made no resistance to the will of God. He fearlessly looked death in the face and accepted it in total abandonment of his soul to the divine mercy.

In the last months of his life physical sufferings were added to the mental strain that afflicted him. But both he accepted and heartily welcomed from the hand of God.

In the early days of July, 1868, on his return from Angers, where he had realized one of his dearest desires, that of raising the first column of a beautiful church in which Our Lord would have a Throne of Exposition less unworthy of Him, his general weakness rapidly increased. His physical strength was gone. The soul had worn out the body. His physician commanded absolute rest and, to secure it, his immediate departure from Paris.

On July 17th, Père Eymard bade adieu to his children whom he was never again to see in this world, and departed, first for Vichy, there to see the Reverend Mère Marguerite, the Superioress of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. This was their last interview here below. After two or three days at Vichy, he started on the 20th for Grenoble where he arrived on the morning of the 21st, very much fatigued. Notwithstanding this, however, he celebrated Holy Mass about ten o'clock at Notre-Dame de la Salette. They wanted to keep him in Grenoble, but he refused, and that evening, at four he took the coach for La Mure.

The heat was intense. A sunstroke, which was unavoidable, at once brought on cerebral congestion

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from which he suffered during the rest of the journey. When he arrived at La Mure at nine o'clock that evening, he had almost lost the use of speech and the contraction of his mouth denoted partial paralysis. His sister came to meet him, greatly distressed to find her brother in so grave a condition. She led him home with difficulty, and he lay down never again to rise. The physician was hastily summoned. He saw at once the gravity of the case, but had little hope of alleviating it. The intense heat of the season greatly increased the patient's sufferings, but he endured all uncomplainingly and with great serenity, testifying as he so well knew how to do his gratitude for the care lavished on him.

The testimonies of affection that he received from the whole city were most consoling. Everyone wanted to see him, and he received all with a kind look and pressure of the hand.

The paralysis did not permit him to pray or to receive Holy Communion. He was suffering far from his Religious family, as yet ignorant of his condition. Our Lord willed all these united sacrifices in order to complete his merits. He was struck by a sickness quite unforeseen, and which had surprised him before he had put his important affairs in order. And yet when asked whether he had anything to communicate to his Religious, any disposition to make, quietly and serenely, he replied: "*No, No.*" Was this not an act of heroic resignation into the hands of Divine Providence? With all his heart he yielded to every disposition of Almighty God.

In this sickness of twelve days, nothing striking was manifested excepting his gentleness, his calmness, his

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admirable serenity. Weakened by illness and the almost total want of nourishment, weighed down by the intense heat of the dog-days, suffering from sharp pains in the head, he never showed the least impatience, not the least dejection nor inquietude. His was the task to console those around him. Unable to speak to them, he looked at them kindly.

He did more. On Wednesday, July 29th, three days before his death, feeling a little better, he arose and appeared unexpectedly to give the blessing at table. It was the hour of repast, and he made a semblance of taking some little thing, but soon after returned to bed. Thus for a moment he cheered those around him. With what admirable patience he allowed himself to be cared for! Desirous that each should have a turn in the little services rendered him, he was anxious that no one should be fatigued by too lengthy attendance on him. He sent them to rest, to take some refreshment. He thought of everything, and he had to be obeyed. He was always himself, the good father! His calmness, simplicity, and sweetness in suffering ravished all who witnessed it. These beautiful virtues must have deeply penetrated his heart, have become as it were natural to him, not to fail him in his last moments. They are certain signs of uncommon sanctity. One of his Religious wrote the following lines on this subject:

“Lord, Thou judgest all things with equity! I thank Thee for the inestimable favor of having seen my Father in his last days, of having cared for him, of having beheld a saint under the stroke of suffering, leaving a Work hardly established, without regrets, without complaint,—dying because Thou didst judge

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it fitting that he should die, believing unnecessary one minute more than Thou didst will, going to death as to Adoration, with not one word to retard it. . . .”

Thus he remained till the last hour as he had himself said many a time, “*The day-laborer of the good God.*”

Scarcely was the gravity of the illness which was going to snatch from them their Founder known in Paris when one of his sons of predilection, Brother Albert, was despatched to him. The next day Père Chanuet, the Master of Novices, also arrived. On seeing them the good Father complained that it was too much, that they should not have put themselves to so much trouble for him. But it was not to be for long, for his illness was rapidly increasing.

The venerated patient, who had already sent for the Curé and resignedly prepared for death, confessed again and communicated several days in succession. During the night between Friday, the 31st of July, and Saturday the 1st of August, toward two o'clock, he received Extreme Unction, administered by Père Chanuet, with the calmness and serenity of a saint going to his God.

“This remembrance will ever remain with the privileged witnesses of the venerated Père Eymard’s last moments. He died without fear and without emotion. . . .”

No sooner had he received the Holy Oils than he felt better, and toward seven o'clock they gave him Holy Communion as Viaticum. From that moment he spoke no more, but remained quietly occupied with his God and eternity. His countenance denoting the

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perfect calm of his heart, was despite his sufferings in sweet repose. He was conversing secretly with Our Lord, whose picture near his bed he frequently regarded, *no complaint on his lips, no regret in his eyes.*

They presented to him a statuette of Our Lady of La Salette, reminding him that they were making a Novena for him in the Sanctuary of Our Lady, and that he had permitted Brother Albert to go solicit his cure from the Good Mother for the benefit of his newborn Community. He smiled, took the little statue in his hand, pressed it to his heart and lips. Then turning his eyes to Our Lord on the Cross, he appeared for a few instants as if speaking to Him, recollecting himself, resigning himself. The doctor declared hope no longer possible, and that we should look forward to the great loss in store for his Religious family.

The dying saint bade adieu to his sons in the most touching and paternal manner, each bowing his head for a last benediction. Père Chanuet asked a special blessing for the whole Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. Even at these last moments, the holy Founder still retained the secret of consoling all around him, giving to one a glance, to another a sign, asking of another some little service.

The supreme moment arrived toward three in the afternoon when, joining in the prayers being recited around him, he asked for some to the Most Blessed Sacrament. His heart was all to Our Lord, and his invincible faith kept him closely united to the Divine Object of his love. Soon his breathing became slower and, blessing for the last time all who were kneeling around him, he gave up his beautiful soul to God, his eyes fixed on the Crucifix.

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Thus died the venerated Father and Founder of the Congregation of the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament.

During his whole illness, he never manifested the least regret at the prospect of departing this life. He knew well that he was leaving his Work in the hands of *Him* who could and would preserve it. His magnificent vow was accomplished. He had raised to Our Lord *Cenacles of Love*, and he himself was the "*the first adorer and the first victim.*" He was the first of his Religious family to exchange the *prie-Dieu* of earth for that of heaven. It was on a Saturday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the Feast of Saint Peter's Chains, the first vespers of the Feast of Our Lady of the Angels.

He had truly run a long course in a short time, for he was only fifty-seven years, five months, and twenty-eight days old. Three of those years had been spent in the *Grand Séminaire* of Grenoble, five in the parochial ministry, seventeen in the Society of Mary, and twelve as Superior of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament which he had founded.

Great was the emotion when the sad news of Père Eymard's death was noised abroad in La Mure. From all sides came crowds of the devout and loyal eagerly desirous to venerate the holy priest as he lay on his bed clothed in the sacerdotal vestments, retaining in death his sweet smile of life. Far from changing his countenance, death had imprinted on it an expression of sweetness and serenity truly celestial. His face was beautiful! This was the cry of admiration uttered by every one on entering the chamber of death. They had come to pray by the dead, but they found them-

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selves before a sleeping saint. All had some petition to make, some blessing to demand, and many whom the venerated dead had most esteemed, could not restrain their tears. The sight of the old men who had known the Father as a child, who recalled his innocence, his piety, was still more touching, their remembrances increasing their emotion.

"We have all passed through his hands," said the Secretary of La Mure. "During his vacations as Abbé, Père Julien used to gather us together and instruct us in the liturgical ceremonies. No one escaped his influence."

On Sunday, from early morn till four in the evening, we had to remain by the body, the room never once being without visitors, some touching the holy remains with various objects of piety, such as Rosaries and medals, and even the keys of their houses, as if to constitute him the guardian of their fireside. The attitude of this crowd before the deceased was not what is ordinarily seen in the presence of death. From all lips came the unanimous exclamation: "Oh, how beautiful he is! He is alive!"

Children were brought in the arms of their mothers, but they were not affrighted at the sight of our holy dead. Nothing is more significant than the homage of innocence from the unsophisticated child, too young to conceal any emotion, rendered to innocence crowned with the aureola of peace and glory.

That evening, fearing that the excessive heat would accelerate the work of death, they determined to place the remains in their coffin. M. le Curé desired that the funeral ceremonies should be performed on Sunday evening that the people of the environs might be



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able to assist at the imposing solemnities, and render this last mark of veneration to the remains of him who had always loved them as his friends and brethren. Never did a man during lifetime better love to render service to the neighbor, and now they recurred to him with confidence, saying that he who had been so kind on earth must be still kinder in heaven.

At six that evening, the funeral cortège wended its way to the church, the mourners headed by Père Leroy, Superior of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers at Marseilles, Père Chanuet, and Père Tesnière, nineteen priests of La Mure and the environs assisted in choir habit, six of the most venerable having solicited the honor of bearing the bier. The crowd was immense, each one desirous for the last time to gaze on the features of the venerated priest and pay him the last tribute of love and respect.

They advanced slowly to the sound of the sacred chants. All the Religious Societies of La Mure were present: the Third Order of Saint Francis; the Third Order of Mary, founded by Père Eymard himself; the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul; and the two Congregations of Penitents of the Most Blessed Sacrament (the Sisters and the Brothers), to which he himself belonged in his youth, and for whom he preached every time he returned to La Mure. The church could not accommodate the crowd, and many were forced to unite in the liturgical prayers from without.

The remains were placed in a zinc coffin, which was inclosed in another of oak. He was interred at the entrance of the cemetery, at the right of the gate, two feet from the apsis of the church. He seemed still to be looking at the tabernacle behind

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which, when scarcely seven years old, he used to pray, *to hear*, according to his own expression, *what Jesus would say to him*.

His tomb is in the shape of a *prie-Dieu* surmounted by an Ostensorium. On the *prie-Dieu* lie a stole and an open book, on whose pages we read the words:

“LET US LOVE JESUS WHO LOVES US SO MUCH IN HIS DIVINE SACRAMENT.”

Well do they sum up all that formed his holy life, *a response to Eucharistic love*.

On Monday morning, August 3d, about nine o'clock, a funeral service was celebrated in the church of La Mure for the repose of his soul. The attendance of the Clergy and the Faithful was considerable and spontaneous, attracted only by the Servant of God's renown for sanctity.

The Office over, Père Leroyer, who had arrived the evening before from Marseilles, mounted the pulpit and retraced the grand lines of that exemplary life. His words were most effective. The emotion by which he was for a moment overcome, found its way to the hearts of his hearers. Never were tears more sincere, more sympathetic than those shed for him who had become a protector for all. If the voice of the people is the voice of God, there is no doubt that He will one day deign to bestow on him the crown of the saints. How could He fail to glorify before men, him who lived only to love Him and to make Him loved!

The day following the death of the Servant of God, Père Mayet wrote to Père Chanuet a letter which shows with what veneration he honored his saintly

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friend. He says: "My heart is broken, my eyes are filled with tears. . . . I weep with you. I send up my prayers and my sorrowful *fiat voluntas tua*, but sincerely resigned. . . . I await from your charity details of one of my oldest companions in arms, my friend, my brother, with whom I had but one heart and one soul, our Father, our Saint! . . .

" . . . *Nolite timere, pusillus grex.* . . . I think for you consolation surpasses sorrow. I should not be surprised if he wrought miracles. Fear not to ask them of him. Ask them boldly and confidently.

"To God alone! To-day there is no other adieu to say. . . . I embrace you before these cherished remains, the envelope *mortified and pure of one of the holiest and whitest souls that I have known on earth.*"

Père Chanuet, who had assisted Père Eymard in his last moments, wrote of him, August 19, 1868, doubtless to Père Mayet:

"How you would have rejoiced to see our well-beloved Father clothed in his sacerdotal vestments! If you knew how beautiful he was! Never were so much serenity, so much sweetness in his face. We would have wished to take his portrait, but there is no means of producing a beautiful picture in La Mure.

"In spite of our great desire, *mon Père*, we have to undergo the bitter trial of leaving his remains at La Mure. His sister and with her the whole city will not allow us to have them. Perhaps later we shall be more successful.

"Dear Father, I love your words and the accent of lively affection that prompts them. It is our joy, our confidence to behold so much homage paid to

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our well-beloved Father. Oh! yes, let us not doubt the power of his intercession, and let us ask him constantly to let us feel it.

“He died in calm so admirable! I can not say how great it was. If he did not die on his *prie-Dieu*, as he so often desired, he died as a true adorer, thinking only of the glory and the will of his Master, forgetting self even in death. . . .”

The following letter is from the pen of Père Touche. In it we see unveiled his veneration for the beloved dead. It was written from Louvesc (Ardèche), by Sattillieu, August 8, 1868:

“Very Reverend Father,

“I learned by yesterday’s papers of the death of my child, my friend, my Father—the death of Very Reverend Père Eymard. I have just been celebrating Mass for his intention. I can not say all that this death has been to me. His beautiful soul is continually before me. *I can not pray for this holy priest. I do so, because I ought, but I am convinced* that he is in glory. On learning of his death yesterday, I at once confided my soul to his care. He is doing me good, I feel it. From the height of heaven he will watch over his Order, he will bless his children.

“How he must adore the Divine Saviour in the Sacrament of His Love! My child, my friend, my Father, pray for me, bless your family! May it be fervent, and may it immolate itself for Him who is continually shedding His Divine Blood for us!

“Prepare the matter for his *Life*. I promise you much for it. *All his innocent youth is before me*. He one day told me in confidence that I have always had the initiative in all the greatest happenings of his

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life. When I am able I shall go for some days to Marseilles in order to give you this information."

M. l'Abbé Giraud, Vicar of La Mure, wrote to Père Tesnière, September 20, 1868: ". . . I shall soon go to kneel at the tomb of your venerated Superior, and I shall earnestly ask of him the spirit of his children and the love of the Eucharist. I shall pray for you, Brother, for Père Chanuet, etc. The little nook we have chosen for the Father's tomb has just been newly plastered. The stone *prie-Dieu* is in place and produces quite a beautiful effect. I think, however, that the ostensorium is rather small. In a little while they must put a railing around the modest monument. You will be edified to know that the Father's tomb is more and more frequented, and that the wreathes and bouquets are constantly being renewed. . . ."

Long after, when Père Eymard's tomb no longer possessed its treasure and his mortal remains had been transported to Paris, the Faithful still continued to pray at the empty tomb, invoking him whom they regard as a saint, whom they believe all-powerful before God.

This death, as unforeseen as it was sudden, since in the Houses of his Congregation they were even ignorant of his illness, was like a thunderbolt for his spiritual sons, for the *Servants of the Blessed Sacrament*, for his numerous friends, who all lost in him the *Saint* whom they loved to hear, to behold in prayer, to consult. His Religious sons would not believe it and, when they had to resign themselves to the evidence of death, they hoped for a resurrection. Among all the Founders of Religious Orders, Père Eymard was

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one of those less frequently among their own. fervent prayers rose to Heaven for his soul, but they prayed more to him than for him, so sure were they of his protecting power. All who knew him, who saw his work, who received his wise direction, whose heart was warmed by his apostolic word to which they offered no resistance,—all without exception render homage to his remarkable virtue, his sanctity.

Nothing more clearly proves the profound impression produced by his death than the letters written the day after this irreparable loss. We shall quote a few as they come to hand. Mme. Jordan wrote in August, 1868: “. . . Hardly had death taken place when the chamber was crowded with people, and it could not be vacated. The Commissary of police, the gendarmes were obliged to interfere. They insisted on their leaving the chamber that others might enter. They touched to the holy remains chaplets, medals, even house keys. His sister told me that he looked very beautiful, his countenance not being at all altered.

“I asked why they were in so great a hurry to bury him. It was because they were afraid the Fathers would want his remains. His sister did not wish to give them up, and the whole city supported her, saying that she need have no fear, they would not allow her brother to be taken away.

“There was so great a crowd at the funeral that the Fathers feared they would not be able to proceed with their design. They have to follow out their idea later. They had him encased in a leaden coffin. . . .”

In a letter of August 6, 1868, addressed by Mme. Jordan to Mlle. M. Monavon, she says: “. . .

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What a beautiful day he chose to go to God! . . . the first Saturday of the month, the Feast of Saint Peter's Chains, and the eve of Our Lady of the Angels. He is in heaven, let us not doubt. He so loved God and souls, and he suffered so much! How happy he is! Praying for him, I also invoke him. He was a friend on earth, he is a protector on high! . . ."

In another letter by the same to Mlle. Gérin, under the same date, we read: "My dear friend, my daughter will hand you this letter. You have already heard of the sainted Father. . . . That voice is silent! I shall never see him again! I shall never again address myself to him but in God!

". . . How I wish now to make him known for the glory of God and the salvation of souls! But what pen could paint that soul so great and candid, so disinterested and true, that heart so pure and tender, that saint so amiable! We are beginning to copy his letters that we may communicate them. Pray much for him, although it seems to me he is surely in heaven, and I often invoke him. We must not run the risk of leaving him in purgatory.

"He died on the 1st of August, at three o'clock, the same hour as Our Lord, Jesus Christ, his Master and ours, whom he sought so much to glorify. . . . on Saturday, the Blessed Virgin's day, at the time we were beginning to gain the Indulgence of the Portiuncula."

Mlle. Adèle Gérin, August 9, 1868, replied to the foregoing letter:

". . . To pray for him is a duty and a need of the heart. But I feel that it is an alms placed in his



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hands for other souls. We shall procure him the happiness of still giving after death. In his dovelike simplicity, he never offended the good God, and in his seraphic love, he melted and changed into diamonds the little rust of human frailty. This is true for this soul of most rigorous exactitude. *He might rejoice not to be disturbed in heaven, but you, dear daughter, you have the right to do it.* This word is the *adieu* in advance under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.  
. . .”

On September 12, 1868, she again wrote to Mme. Jordan:

“. . . See what they say of our good Père Eymard. . . . every one is proclaiming him a saint! The voice of the people is truly the Voice of God in this canonization!

“The keys of houses, blessed by his contact, have brought tears to my eyes. It is the choosing of him to guard and protect each fireside, and that in his native city, whither God led him at his last hour, as if to establish him its patron.

“You are left very lonely, well-beloved daughter of that saintly Father. But a death so glorious and so precious to heaven and earth, . . . is that death? Shall you not be nearer to him than ever? Will not his direction remain for you sovereign, efficacious, and intimate? I believe it, and though there is immense sacrifice, there will be neither loss nor prejudice. You will feel yourself under the invisible hand of a glorified soul. . . .”

On October 17, 1868, Mme. Lepage wrote as follows to Mme. Jordan:

“The almost complete absence of news of our good

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saint, Père Eymard, is for us also a very great trial, and the void that his death has made in our hearts increases every day. . . .

"Passing through Paris, we learned that the difficulty of removing the holy Founder's remains from La Mure has made them abandon the project, and they are thinking rather of realizing the ardent desire that he had of establishing a House of the Blessed Sacrament in his native city. But God alone knows when they will be able to make that foundation.

"As to his *Life*, they will write it. Documents abound. But it takes time to get them together, to examine them. It will be some time before we shall be able to read the history of his virtues.

"Lastly, Madame, you will guard his venerated tomb in your Dauphiny. It will be a stopping-place for the pilgrims to La Salette, and you who live not far from it can visit it sometimes."

Mme. Jordan, September 16, 1868, wrote to Mlle. Edmée Brenier de Montmorand the following beautiful words about Père Eymard, which show the holy veneration she felt for him:

". . . How sad it is to think that those lips are silent forever, that we *shall never listen to those beautiful words, never more behold that ascetic face, that figure which shed around the perfume of holiness, the sight of which alone could make one better!* God so willed it, we must bow to His decree. He judged that our Father had labored enough, suffered enough.

"I have had some details since his death, and he had told us enough during his lifetime to make us know what crosses weighed upon him. No one founds a new Order without many obstacles.

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"I saw some one the other day who told me that Père Eymard had done in twelve years what any other would have wanted fifty to accomplish. But it was not without trials and sufferings. There is one House in Paris, another in the environs, the Novitiate (Saint-Maurice), one in Marseilles, one in Angers, two in Brussels, one for the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament in Angers—seven in all.

"You say you can not bring yourself to pray for him. I understand what you will say to me: *Who then will go straight to heaven, if not he?* How can we think that after so many labors, sufferings, and above all so much love, he is not now in the enjoyment of a very beautiful place in heaven? I, too, believe that. But the Church prays, and it is better to do as she does. I shall not cease my prayers for him."

## XIX

### PÈRE EYMARD'S RENOWN FOR SANCTITY AFTER DEATH.

The renown for sanctity which followed the Servant of God during life did not cease with his death. Still more luminous and accentuated, it came forth from his tomb and spread over France, and into the other countries of Europe and America. A large number of illustrious personages have borne testimony to it in writing. We shall cite some of them, and first of all, that of the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Servant of God was born.

Monseigneur Fava, at the close of a discourse pronounced at the laying of the cornerstone of a new church in La Mure, said in reference to Père Eymard :

"Can we finish without evoking before God the memory of one of your compatriots, of a priest, of the holy Founder of the Fathers of the Most Blessed Sacrament? It was here Père Eymard was born, here in La Mure he grew up to manhood, here his pure soul opened to the lights and attractions of the tabernacle. His innocent heart turned toward these mountains, these valleys, these rushing torrents, this magnificent country that his childhood loved, and where his body has rested several years. Ah, from the height of the eternal tabernacles may he deign to protect it and interest himself in this work which we place under the protection of the Holy Family and his own!"

Cardinals and Bishops have affirmed their conviction of Père Eymard's sanctity.

Cardinal Parrocchi, Vicar General of His Holiness

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Leo XIII, speaking of Venerable Père Eymard's writings, said: "*Accrediterebbe queste meditazioni anche solamente la nota santità dell'Autore. Il Padre Eymard è stato a' nostri tempi uno de' più ferventi adoratori della santa Eucaristia: These meditations alone would accredit the note of sanctity to their author. Père Eymard was certainly in our day one of the most fervent adorers of the Holy Eucharist.*"

Cardinal Svampa, Archbishop of Cologne, writes:

*"Quando l'opera del Padre Eymard comincio a rivelarsi in Italia io fui tra i primi avventurati che ebbi la facilità di conoscerla, e strinsi a Roma relazione fraterna coi ferverosi suoi figli. Da quel tempo in poi ho sempre avuto grande venerazione all'uomo providenziale che fondava la Congregazione del SSmo Sacramento, per mezzo della quale la fiamma Eucaristica si è largamente dilatata nella parte più eletta del clero cattolico. . . .* When the Works of Père Eymard began to be known in Italy, I was among the fortunate ones who had the first opportunity of learning it, and of holding relations in Rome with his fervent sons. Since then I have always felt great veneration for the providential man who founded the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, by means of which Eucharistic devotion has been so widely spread by the elect of the Catholic clergy."

Cardinal Langenieux, Archbishop of Reims, writes:

*"Enimvero hunc tam commendabilem presbyterum non tantum ex ejus præclara fama novi et judicavi: sed dum officio Promotoris in Diœcesi Parisiensi Pluribus annis fungerer, sæpe sæpius tam scriptis quam locutionibus omnes intimi hujus sacerdotis sensus bene mihi aperti sunt et noti, zelus ejus pro cleri sanctitate*

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*et pro presbyterorum reorum emendatione, sed præsertim ejus dilectio erga SSimum Eucharistiæ Sacramentum singularis, quam jucunde mihi crebro redoluerunt! Vir simplex et rectus, ut justus, ex fide vixit vitamque sanctorum in hoc sæculo renovavit. . . .*

I have not known and estimated this priest as so commendable merely on account of the high renown for sanctity that clings to his memory; but having fulfilled for several years the office of Promoter of the Diocese of Paris, the private sentiments of this holy priest were frequently communicated to me both by writing and *viva voce*. I learned then to admire his zeal for the sanctification of the clergy, for the amendment of tepid priests, but above all his ardent love for the Most Blessed Sacrament. How pleasing to me is his frequent remembrance! Like the just man, this simple and upright man lived by faith, and renewed the life of the saints in this world."

Cardinal Richelmy, Archbishop of Turin, writes:

*" . . . Il Padre Eymard fu veramente l'uomo pio, eletto dalla divina Provvidenza a illuminarci e dirigerci in questo secolo di egoismo per la via della cognizione santa del grande mistero dell'amore. . . .*

Père Eymard was truly a pious man, chosen by Divine Providence to enlighten and direct us in this age of egoism by the most holy knowledge of the Great Mystery of Love. . . ."

Many Bishops have freely testified to the reputation for sanctity that Père Eymard had won by his virtuous career. Mgr. Gouthe-Soulard, Archbishop of Aix, wrote of him as follows:

"I gladly give my testimony upon the virtues of your Founder, Very Reverend Père Eymard. I knew

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him at Lyons for many years, and I always looked upon him as a holy Religious, breathing only and in an heroic degree the love of God and souls. I never knew a more fervent, more persevering, more zealous adorer of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. May God bless your efforts, Very Reverend Father, and may our dear France soon count one saint more!"

Mgr. Germain, Bishop of Rodez, wrote as follows:

"I saw Reverend Père Eymard but once when I was in Montbel, at the House of the Reverend Marists, in 1860. The Marists already looked upon him as a saint. They spoke of him with profound veneration and enthusiastic admiration, although he had quitted their Society to found the Congregation of the Priests of the Blessed Sacrament.

"Père Germain, my relative, former Provincial of the Marist Fathers and a friend of Père Eymard, considered him a saint, and could easily understand how with his state of soul, he could have quitted the Society to follow another way which appeared to be pointed out to him by a higher Will. This is all I know. It is little, but very certain, and my memory on this point is most precise and faithful."

Mgr. de la Bouillerie, Bishop of Carcassonne, on the 10th of September, 1871, wrote to Reverend Père Tesnière:

"I thank you for having communicated to me the Life and Works of Reverend Père Eymard. I had the honor of knowing that excellent Religious personally, and I have often thanked the God of the Eucharist for having been able, though in a very feeble measure, to contribute to the foundation of his pious Institute.



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"During the Octave of the Epiphany, he preached one of the sermons usual at this time at Saint-André de la Valle, applying to the Most Blessed Sacrament the mystery of the Royal Magi's visit.

"Several times he expressed the desire to get possession of the Sanctuary of the Cenacle at Jerusalem, but it was never realized. He wanted also to find some church in Rome wherein he might establish in a special manner the worship of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

"His love for Holy Church and for the Sovereign Pontiff was extremely heartfelt, and he often bitterly lamented the abandonment in which the Powers left the Holy Father.

"Père Eymard was full of affability for all the members of our Community, above all he revered the priests. The general impression that he left among us was that of a true Servant of God, of a man extraordinarily devoted to the Most Blessed Sacrament.

"This devotion to the Blessed Sacrament inspired Père Eymard with special sympathy for our holy Founder, Saint Alphonsus di Liguori, who did so much to extend and popularize this great devotion, above all by his *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*.

"It was perhaps Saint Alphonsus who obtained for him the favor of dying on the same day and at the same hour as himself, that is, on August 1, shortly after the noonday *Angelus*, on the Feast of Saint Peter's Chains, at the beginning of the great Indulgence of the Portiuncula and of the first vespers of Our Lady of the Angels, also on the Feast itself of our holy Doctor and Founder."

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The Reverend Père De Villefort, a celebrated Jesuit of Rome, thus expressed himself regarding the Congregation founded by Père Eymard: "*This Work of the Most Blessed Sacrament is beyond all human laws. It was conceived only in the ecstasy of love!*"

It is certain that it is indeed a consequence of the Servant of God's unbounded love for the Holy Eucharist. True love alone can conceive and engender such Works.

Reverend Père Chaignon, S.J., author of *Sacerdotal Meditations*, and highly appreciated among the clergy for the numerous ecclesiastical Retreats which he gave throughout France, entertained great veneration for Père Eymard and special esteem for the Work he had founded.

"It was the Feast of Saint Ignatius. . . . Invited to dine with the Reverend Jesuits of Angers, Very Reverend Père Audibert, Superior General of our Congregation, wrote to us as follows: 'I heard Reverend Père Chaignon make this public declaration. *No doubt, my dear Fathers, our vocation is beautiful, and we ought to thank Our Lord for it. But I esteem the Work founded by the saintly Père Eymard of all others the most excellent on account of the sublimity of its end.*' I vouch for the authenticity of this declaration."

Père Blot, Apostolic Missionary, on January 6, 1898, expressed himself on Père Eymard's sanctity in the following terms:

"Yes, I desire for your venerated Founder, the Very Reverend Père Eymard, the future honors of Canonization. I think him worthy of them.

"While awaiting those honors, how desirable it is

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that the introduction of his Cause should permit us to bestow upon him the title of Venerable! At the close of 1894, His Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio at Paris, and in the beginning of 1895, His Lordship, Mgr. Fava, Bishop of Grenoble, agreed with me on this point.

"During all the months that I saw, knew, and associated with Père Eymard, whether in 1864 or 1865, I never remarked in him anything that might be called an imperfection in the practice of the theological virtues, the four cardinal virtues, and the principal Christian virtues.

"What I most admired was his faith in the Eucharist, in the Real Presence. Before the Blessed Sacrament, he was no longer a man, he was a seraph. Thither he came to finish the preparation for his instructions. It was the furnace in which he baked his bread, that heavenly bread, which he was going to distribute to God's children on earth. Ah! how inflamed he was when speaking of the Sacrament of Love in all the churches and chapels in which he was invited to preach! He desired and he knew how to enlighten and inflame his hearers. No one could listen to him without loving Jesus Eucharistic more fervently.

"Besides the adorers of day and night, he wanted to group around the tabernacle men of learning and science, writers, orators who, having become inflamed by their nearness to the sacred fire, would go forth by their writings, their discourses, to illumine, to spread everywhere throughout the world the divine flame.

"Another effect of his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament that I admired in him, was his respect, his affection, his compassion for priests, even for those

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that had lapsed into a pitiable state. To them he was a father. He was still more, he was the mother of the prodigal son.

"With the Faithful themselves, he appeared always filled with the God of the altar. In spite of his natural vivacity, I never saw him impatient, never out of temper, and every word that left his mouth seemed impregnated with the Blood of the Lamb which was perfuming his lips."

We must add that the Servant of God was in touch with all the holy personages of his time: Père Chevrier, Founder of the Work of First Communion at Lyons; Père Hermann, the convert of the Blessed Sacrament; M. Dupont, "The Holy Man of Tours"; Mlle. Jaricot, the Foundress of the Work of the Propagation of the Faith; Mlle. Delmas, the heroine of the Hostages of the Commune; the Commandant Marceau; the Reverend Père Muard, Founder of the Benedictines of the Pierre-qui-Vire; the Reverend Mère Marie Thérèse, who founded the Congregation *de l'Adoration Réparatrice*; Mlle. Danion, later the Foundress of *L'Œuvre de l'Action de Grâces*; M. le Baron de Benque, one of the founders of the Nocturnal Adoration in Paris; the admirable Jean Ricoux; the Curé d'Ars, who called him "*his saint*," etc., etc.

All esteemed him a supernatural man, wholly consumed with zeal for the Eucharist, devoted soul and body to adoring It and propagating Its worship. His confessors bear evidence to the holiness of the Servant of God.

Père Touche, Apostolic Missionary, who knew him better than any one else, since he had followed him up from early childhood till his death, to whom he had

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made his general confessions at all the great epochs of his life, and who knew his most secret thoughts, hesitated not to affirm several times in presence of the Community of the Blessed Sacrament at Marseilles, in 1871, his conviction of Père Eymard's innocence, and that he had preserved intact his Baptismal grace.

The Reverend Père Bernardin, of Lyons, another of his confessors, declared that he looked upon him as a saint. "I heard his confession from 1859 till 1867, and from all the relations I had with him, I came to the conclusion that I was dealing with a saint. This was the opinion of a large number of people of piety and judgment whom I knew. All proclaimed the virtues and reputation for sanctity of this worthy Religious."

Reverend Mère Marguerite, for twenty-three years under his enlightened direction, who received from him a voluminous correspondence and founded with his coöperation the Congregation of the Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, venerated him as a saint.

In October, 1852, she said to Reverend Père Mayet: "Persuaded that Père Eymard is a saint held in reserve by Divine Providence, a man who will one day be made known for the edification of many, I have gathered together some pages on his early years."

These pages had been written under the dictation of Mlle. Marianne, Père Eymard's sister, who for a long time refused to eulogize her brother by relating anything connected with his boyhood. They were examined by Père Mayet in the researches that he made when about to undertake the biography of his venerated confrère. The facts there related are the same in substance as those we have given in the earlier pages of this sketch.

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When Père Mayet saw Père Eymard's work on his entrance into the Society of Mary, he understood at once that his was the soul of a saint. He became his friend, his confidant, and for seventeen years he took notes which might serve for the biography he was preparing and be also, as he thought, useful in the Cause of the Servant of God, when death should have broken the vase and allowed the perfume to escape. He felt certain that one day the good odor of the heroic virtues of his saintly friend would reveal him to the world.

In June, 1869, he wrote:

"I hope God will one day glorify on earth your venerated Father, my holy friend, for the glory of Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate. But I must not dilate on this subject, for my esteem and veneration for that true brother would lead me too far. Let me tell you, however, a beautiful reply he made to me once.

"You know God had given him a gift of unquestionable attractiveness, and the souls whom he met on his way, in all classes and conditions of life, never more freed themselves from his influence. One day when we were chatting on this subject, he replied to one of my remarks in these words expressive of perfect detachment: *'Thank God, my heart is never taken up with any one!'*

"Here is something that they said about him: *That man is a genius and a saint.* Such was the idea entertained of him in Rome, and we found it out later."

Here we might cite one of Père Eymard's own words committed to writing in the personal notes of the last Retreat of his life, made in May, 1868, two

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months before his death: "Yes, my heart has always loved Jesus Christ. No one has ever held this heart . . . ."

A poor possessed man of Lyons spoke as follows of Père Eymard:

"One must be good in this world in order not to remain ten years in purgatory. The holy Curé d'Ars (M. Vianney) went straight to heaven (August 4, 1859), the Reverend Père Marie Chiron also, the Reverend Père Eymard the same (August 1, 1868). He never belonged to the devil. He performed so many penances and austerities that his health was reduced to the state of languor. The devils did all they could to make him sin, but they never succeeded. I said to him: 'You do too much penance!' and he acknowledged it to me like a child. He was indeed a saint! . . . ." (*Livre "Le diable apôtre" de Victor de Stenay, sur la possession d'Antoine Gay. P. 201.*)

Père Eymard had taken an interest in this unhappy man and, with the permission of his Superiors, had tried to relieve him.

His reputation for sanctity increased as the influence of his two Congregations grew, with the development of the Works of Aggregation which he had attached to them, and the diffusion of his other Works.

The Sacerdotal Work, called the Priest-Adorers, which numbers sixty thousand aggregated priests, among whom some are Bishops, count so many admirers and devotees of Père Eymard. They affirm his mission providential, they proclaim his virtues, and they look upon him as their model and their protector in heaven.

The same may be said of the members of his dif-



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ferent Aggregations, which are numbered by hundreds of thousands. They are: *The Simple Aggregation*, *The People's Eucharistic League*, *The Association of Eucharistic Weeks*, *The Members of the Fraternity*, *The Work of Nocturnal Adoration for Men*, and of *Monthly Adoration in the Parishes*. All these without exception proclaim the holiness of the Founder, of the man raised up by Divine Providence to increase our faith in the Real Presence, to make known the Divine love that It reveals, to attract hearts to that first Centre of the supernatural life, to realize practically the "*Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur?*"—I have come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be enkindled?"

When the remains of the venerated Père Eymard were laid in the vault in which they now repose in the choir of our church in Paris, it was found necessary to use some force in restraining the impetuous devotion of the Faithful toward the Servant of God. The flowers thrown on his tomb and the candles burned in his honor bore testimony to their veneration for him. And this universal homage, far from diminishing during the last forty-five years, has increased daily propagated by a similar increase in the devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Père Eymard left at his death some *personal notes* which served him as themes for the numerous sermons he was constantly and untiringly giving, sowing everywhere with full hands the *good grain* of the *good tidings*, the word of the Eucharist, which leads to the centre of Catholic truth. These notes were collected by his spiritual sons into several volumes. Translated into every European language, they are eagerly read

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by persons of all conditions, causing their author everywhere to be blessed and proclaiming his sanctity. Up to the present, however, there exists only a sketch of his life, very interesting, but incomplete, and his numerous correspondence, in which the Servant of God discloses himself in spite of himself, is absolutely unknown to the public. As soon as it shall have been published and a complete *Life* shall have been written, doubtless his renown for sanctity will proportionately increase since he will then be better known.

We might cite here the numerous letters from Bishops, priests, and the devout Faithful, received on the occasion of the publication of the little *Life* entitled *The Priest of the Eucharist*, which appeared in January, 1870. All proclaimed the Founder's holiness and praised his work, so well conceived for the multiplication in the Church of infinite good by leading souls to the truth of the Real Presence.

The possessors of letters or other writings of the Servant of God preserved them as relics. They consented to deprive themselves of them for a while that they might advance his Cause of Beatification, happy to see it introduced, and ardently desirous of its success.

The veneration of the Murois for the memory of their fellow-citizen proves the sanctity of the Servant of God in an exceptional manner. At the time we write, forty-five years after Père Eymard's death, his memory still lives. The population of La Mure are unanimous witnesses on the point of his holiness. They still go to pray at his tomb although deprived of its treasure, persuaded that they have in him a powerful intercessor. The numerous wit-

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nesses still alive in his native country will tell in what veneration they hold their saint. This veneration could not be better manifested than by what happened at La Mure when, nine years after his death, the Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament obtained from the French Government an authorization to remove their Founder's remains to Paris. Long before, on the day after his holy demise, they had made an attempt to do so, but the opposition of the Murois obliged them to desist. And so the venerated remains rested in the cemetery of La Mure, visited by the people of the country and by pilgrims from afar, who came to lay wreaths on his tomb as a sign of their gratitude, and to invoke the Father, the guide, the saint from whom they had ever experienced unfailing kindness and advice that never led them astray.

In 1876 new attempts were made for the same end, but they too were unavailing. Finally, in the following year the unquestionable rights of the Religious of the Blessed Sacrament were recognized and in spite of resistance, the Murois had to yield. On June 27, 1877, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the grave in which his mortal remains had reposed for nine years, was opened, and the oak coffin now fallen to pieces, disclosed intact the other of zinc which contained them. This zinc coffin was placed in another of oak, and a hearse, which the piety of some faithful friends adorned with fresh flowers, bore the venerated remains to Paris, where they arrived on the morning of June 29, the Feast of his glorious patron Saint Peter.

It is well known that many carried away as relics the remains of the worm-eaten coffin while protesting

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all the while against the exhumation which stole from them their treasure. "*We had only one saint,*" they cried, "*and they have taken him away from us.*" But that saint will ever continue the protector of his dear Murois whom he loved so much.

That removal of Père Eymard's remains was, however, the occasion of the most energetic resistance on the part of the populace of La Mure, who desired at any price to retain him whom they revered as a saint. On February 12, 1877, the Minister of the Interior had already authorized the translation of the remains. But opposition from all quarters was so energetic that the Prefect of Isère, M. Paul Laucas, and the Mayor of La Mure, M. Gras, were powerless to execute the orders received. Several months passed before they came to terms.

The Mayor lost the esteem of the populace. They accused him of having received a sum of money to favor the taking away of the body, and nicknamed him "*the seller of the dead.*" Under the pressure of public reprobation, he had to resign his functions as Mayor of La Mure. The people were greatly excited, and a tumult was feared. For several nights an armed force guarded the cemetery to prevent a clandestine removal of the remains. At last, however, they yielded to compulsion. The police force was called out to execute the orders of the Ministry of the Interior, who had given the Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament the necessary authorization.

As soon as the body was exhumed and placed in the hearse that was to take it away, the whole populace of La Mure, a town of 5,000 inhabitants, lined up on the route and showed profound respect, many of them

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on their knees and breathing a last prayer to him whom they so desired to retain among themselves.

The Very Reverend Father Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament and two of his Religious accompanied the precious trust. On their arrival in Paris, it was placed in a lighted chapel and at once became an object of veneration for crowds of the pious Faithful and of his own sons, who now found again their Father after so many years of separation. The impression was indescribable. It seemed to them that they were assisting at a kind of resurrection. He was there, they invoked him, and tears flowed from their eyes.

But it was very different when, yielding to the legitimate desires of those that had known and lived with him, the Superiors decided that they would open the zinc coffin to see the state of the blessed remains, I was going to say *relics*, of their saintly Founder.

What was not the intense joy of all, joy not unmixed with astonishment, when he was disclosed to the loving gaze of his children! They beheld him perfectly intact, perfectly preserved. They saw him, his own very self with his sweet countenance, his expression of kindness which he had never lost. His sacerdotal vestments, the soutane, the alb, the stole, the chasuble had been respected by time. Death had guarded well his precious trust.

"I entertain the hope," wrote Père Tesnière the day after Père Eymard's decease, August, 1868, "that his carefully guarded innocence, that the Body of Jesus Christ so often and so well received, will restore him to us free from the attacks of corruption."

*La Revue du Saint Sacrement*, II Year, July 15. records the event in the following terms:

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“ . . . The coffin reached Paris on Friday, June 29, 1877. That same day they opened it and found the remains of the Father in such a state of preservation as to greatly astonish the assistants. The flesh, though a little darkened, was intact, and no corpse-like odor was perceived. The features were so natural that not only they who had seen him during life, but they who knew him only by his portrait, exclaimed: “There he is! It is indeed he!” . . . It was like an apparition, the return, the resurrection of a father whose absence had been wept for nine years.

“A funeral service was celebrated the following Tuesday, July 3, in the Chapel of *Corpus Christi*. M. Lagarde, Archdeacon of Notre-Dame and First Vicar General of His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, was pleased to accept the invitation to sing the Mass and give the Absolution. He wished to tender to Père Eymard this solemn testimony of a friendship which, born with the foundation of the Work, had gone on strengthening till his death.

“Almost all the Religious bodies were represented, and the sanctuary was crowded with priests, among them the honorary Chamberlain of the Pope, the Archbishop of Sussex, a friend of Père Eymard, and Mgr. Duplessis, Roman Prelate.

“The assistants were numerous. Some like Mme. Lepage, and Mme. de Grandville, had come from distant provinces to pay their respects to the Father. The tribunes were occupied by gentlemen, several among them friends of the venerated deceased.”

The funeral oration was pronounced by Reverend Père Tesnière.

Filial piety was on this day gratified by the sight

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of the venerated features of the saintly deceased, after which the coffin was closed and sealed, and lowered into the tomb prepared for it in the middle of the sanctuary, between the *prie-Dieu* of the adorers, at the foot of the Eucharistic Throne. There Père Eymard will be again and forever an adorer of the august Sacrament exposed. The dust of that body which had life only for the service of the Blessed Sacrament, will teach devotedness even till death to that glorious cause. Hidden in the depths of the tomb, he will repeat aloud the device of Eucharistic holiness: "*Oportet illum crescere, me autem minui.*—He must increase, and I must decrease."

Let us add that no means has ever been employed to maintain and spread such a reputation of sanctity, that no one either by word or writing has ever sought to oppose it, but on the contrary all who knew the Servant of God are deeply persuaded that his renown for sanctity is founded on his saintly life and apostolic Works, and that he is worthy of the honors of the altar. Their most ardent desire is to see the triumph of his Beatification.

## XX

### MIRACLES AFTER DEATH

We shall now speak of the miraculous intervention of the Servant of God after death. From the moment of that happy demise, his protection over his Congregation was felt most unmistakably in critical circumstances, whether in serious financial embarrassments, whether at the time of the war of 1870 and the Paris Commune, or later in 1880, at the period of the Decrees of expulsion; or in a project of transforming the Congregation into a Religious Order, a project which had brought division among its members and for a time menaced the existence of the Founder's Work.

Several members of his two Congregations and some seculars attribute to the prayers offered to God through the intercession of His Servant the different favors in the spiritual, as well as in the temporal order, which were granted them. Many pray to him daily, and feel assured of his powerful protection with God.

The following extraordinary fact took place August 1, 1868, at the Mother House of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament:

"It was three o'clock in the afternoon. The sacristan, Sœur Marie of the Blessed Sacrament, being in the sanctuary, noticed the ostensorium very perceptibly oscillating. In presence of this fact she at once divined the cause and hesitated not to say that at the same hour her saintly Père Eymard had quitted the earth. Unable to restrain her sobs,

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she went to Mère Assistante, who held the place of our venerated Mère Marguerite when absent, and related to her what had happened, adding that her venerated Father had died at three o'clock.

"Some hours later, a despatch came bringing the sorrowful news. It was indeed at three o'clock that the soul of our holy Founder had quitted this land of exile." This fact was attested by the Superiors of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

On the day of Père Eymard's obsequies, Marie Armand, a child of six years, hearing it said that they wanted to take Père Eymard away, cried out: "*No, no! They must not take him away. We have not already too many saints at La Mure.*" This child had never seen the saintly Father. She was at the time suffering from serious eye trouble. Her aunt asked Mlle. Eymard for a little relic to apply to her eyes. They gave her two medals blessed by the Father. As soon as they had put one around the neck of the child, she began to grow better, and her aunt in gratitude, believing that she owed this cure to the prayers of the Father, laid on his tomb a beautiful vase of flowers. (*Report of Reverend Père Tesnière.*)

Mme. Jordan speaks of a cure obtained at the tomb of Père Eymard in a letter addressed by her, September 15, 1868, to Mlle. Gerin. ". . . While I was at his tomb, I asked him among many other things the cure of a poor mother of a family, who had a lame knee and could neither work nor walk, and besides she was suffering much. I have seen her again. She is no longer suffering, she can sleep, and from what she told me of the time of the change, it coincides with my

journey. She was at confession and Communion this morning, and we began a Novena to the Most Blessed Sacrament with Père Eymard's invocations: *Praised and thanked . . . and All ye saints, pray for us. . . .*"

Mme. Victoire Oddoux, mother of Soeur Philomène of Angers, fell sick in the last days of May, 1871, of double inflammation of the lungs, that is, as she explained it, when cured on one side, the inflammation attacked the other. Her case became so grave that toward the end of June the doctor declared her in danger of death. They wanted to summon her daughter from Angers by letter. "No," said the physician, "by telegraph, for she will not live till the answer."

The Last Sacraments were administered. "I was no longer for this world," she said. They asked prayers at Angers through the intercession of Père Eymard. From that moment she grew better, quickly returned to health, and, as she says, is stronger now than ever. "I believe," she said, "and many others have said the same, that it is to the prayers of the Father I owe my cure. He was my brother's godfather, and always a friend of my family. It is to him that my daughter owes her vocation."

The following deposition was made to Père Tesnière at La Mure, August 1, 1872.

Melanie Terrat (wife of Reynier Coline), aged sixty-one years, from eight to ten years deprived of the sight of her right eye, had preserved an excellent left eye, being able to read without glasses.

Now, in harvest-time, toward the end of July, 1870, she felt one night a little fatigue in that left eye. Next morning, she went out according to custom for a

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day's work. As soon as she reached the field, she suddenly felt her sight leaving her, even before she had brought down one sheaf. She did not experience any sensible pain at the moment, only a little flow of water. Happily, her husband had accompanied her. She said to him: "I can not see any longer," and he was obliged to lead her back to the house.

Some hours after, she went with her husband to the home of the Mlles. Eymard, who were her support and consolation. They made her see Doctor Bonne. He ordered remedies, leeches, etc., but he said in private to the Mlles. Eymard: "I very much fear that all is over, nothing can be done."

Two days after they again saw the doctor. He prescribed something new, but repeated his fear of not being able to do anything for her. Then the Mlles. Eymard proposed a Novena to the Father, some prayers and the invocation: "Holy Pierre, Holy Julien, Père Eymard, intercede for us! Ah! restore my sight, I beg of you!" The confidence of the poor woman was extraordinary. From morning till night she repeated these prayers. Daily she became a little better. Five days after the accident she could see distinctly, and her sight is still perfect, August 4, 1872.

Besides the prayers that she said, she wore on her eye a little bandage in which was sewed a scrap of Père Eymard's clothing. After her recovery, every evening on retiring she put it on again and said a *Pater* begging Père Eymard to preserve her sight. She herself attested this fact before Reverend Père Tesnière.

The venerated Mère Marguerite related the following fact which happened to herself:

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"In 1873, we received notice to go to Lyons to consult about the question of a foundation. I was suffering. I made a Novena to our Father, using some oil from the lamp of the Most Blessed Sacrament which he had blessed at the time of my journey to Paris in 1868. I said, if he cured me, it would be a sign that he wanted me to go to Lyons. At the end of the Novena, I was able to make the journey without difficulty." This fact was attested by the Major Superiors of the Servants of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Mme. Aguillon *née* Joséphine Roman, in religion Sœur Sophie of the Blessed Sacrament, living at Marseilles, 2, *rue* Melchion, recounted and attested the following fact which happened to herself:

"While mending a carpet, in consequence of a false movement, a long needle ran into my right breast and completely disappeared in it. It was buried three or four centimetres in the flesh. I could not move without feeling pain like a sharp pricking.

"Two or three days after, not being able to bear it longer, I spoke to my Superioress. It was decided that Sœur Pirrette, then infirmarian, should examine the case, and next day send for M. Farge, the physician of the Community.

"Sœur Pierrette advised me to invoke the venerated Père Eymard, and gave me a scrap of stuff that had belonged to him, which I placed on the wound. Next day on rising, without pain or any flow of blood I could myself extract the needle, which came of itself, as it were, into my fingers."

This fact happened in the year. . . . The account of it was placed by Sœur Marie in the archives of



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the Community of Angers in obedience to the orders of Mgr. Grosleau, then the ecclesiastical Superior.

This same deposition was made by her verbally to the Postulator, September 8, 1898, at Marseilles.

Sœur Elizabeth, Religious of Saint Thomas de Villeneuve, of the Convent of the Good Shepherd, Paris, 71 *rue* Denfert-Rochereau, formerly *rue* d'Enfer, was cured through Père Eymard's intercession.

She herself relates her cure in the following words:

"As soon as the translation of the remains of Père Eymard from the cemetery of La Mure d'Isère to the Mother House of the Fathers of the Most Blessed Sacrament at Paris became known, our Superioress, Mère Courtel, felt so strongly urged to send me to Avenue Friedland to ask my cure of Père Eymard that she was not able to sleep that night.

"I declared it useless, and I did not want to go. For sixteen years I had suffered from articular rheumatism which rendered walking almost impossible, and I was frequently obliged to keep my bed from the intense pain. Three physicians had vainly tried to cure, or at least to relieve my suffering. They had tried all possible remedies, but without success. The last one declared that nothing could be done. Above all, for eighteen months my suffering had increased rendering me incapable of anything whatever. Nevertheless I wanted to obey my Superioress, and so I began a Novena. On the first day I assisted at Holy Mass, which was celebrated in the chapel in which they had deposited Père Eymard's coffin, *rue* Chateaubriand, 14.

"In obedience, I asked the good Father for my cure. My prayer was this: 'Cure me, good Father,

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since you love the Good Shepherd so much, and you are so loved in it. Cure me that I may still be of use to the Good Shepherd. I do not ask for a perfect cure, only to be able to walk and render some service.' During the course of the Novena my pains increased, but my Superioress said to me: 'So much the better, Sister, it is a sign that you will be cured.'

"On the last day they took me again to the chapel where reposed the Father's remains, to hear Holy Mass which was to be said for my intention, to receive Holy Communion, and for the last time to ask my cure. During the Mass I made an act of abandonment to the holy will of God, to endure my pains all my life if so He willed. When all was over, I could not lift my feet to get into the little carriage, and I was still suffering greatly. But at the end of a quarter of an hour, I felt a singular sensation, and I said to myself, '*Perhaps I am cured.*' A moment after the impression became a certainty, and I said to the Sister who was with me: 'Sister, I think I am cured. I want to walk, to run.' That Sister is now the Superioress of the Convent of the Good Shepherd, the Rev. Mère Cotard. As soon as I reached the Community Room, I began to walk without experiencing the least pain. That same day I took a walk with the Reverend Mother Superioress, going and coming on foot without fatigue.

"It is now twenty-one years since then, and the pains have never reappeared. I have been able to walk and regularly perform my duty without interruption. Behold what I can fearlessly declare before God and under oath. Since then I always carry around me a little piece of Rev. Père Eymard's alb, cut from

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that in which he was clothed at his death. Paris, April 29, 1898."

Some days after this cure, in July, 1877, the Superioress of this Religious of the Good Shepherd unknown to her, sent to the Fathers of the Most Blessed Sacrament an account of the cure which exhibited all the characteristics of a supernatural fact.

After the inquiry of the month of April, 1898, this account was found in the archives of the Mother House. It accorded exactly with what Sœur Elizabeth had given twenty-one years before. It was the counter-inquiry of Divine Providence.

Innumerable other miraculous interventions of Venerable Père Eymard's power of intercession have happened since the writing of the above and are now happening every day, especially cures obtained in answer to prayers said in his honor. They can not be attributed to purely natural causes, but only to the particular intervention of God for the glorification of His Servant. A fuller and more comprehensive *Life* of the Servant of God, which is already nearing completion, will record them for the edification of the Faithful.

Numbers of persons, ecclesiastics, religious, and laics have expressed the firm conviction that it will please Almighty God some day to manifest by striking signs the sanctity of His Servant. He had too zealously sought the glory of his Divine Master, the honor of His Sacrament, for Our Lord not to realize in him His own promise: "*Qui me confessus fuerit coram hominibus, confitebor et ego eum coram Patre meo.*" He who shall have confessed Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father." (*Matt. X, 32.*)

## XXI

DISCOURSE OF REV. ALBERT TESNIÈRE, S.S.S., D.D.

*To make Venerable Père Eymard better known and loved, also as a fitting conclusion to this sketch of his life, we have only to give our readers what his son of predilection, Rev. Albert Tesnière, S.S.S., D.D., pronounced in his discourse, July 3, 1877, on the occasion of the translation of the mortal remains of the Servant of God to Paris where they still rest in the Church of Corpus Christi:*

*"Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem in me manet et ego in illo.—He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me and I in him." (John VI, 57.)*

These words appear to me to sum up very exactly the life and work, the character and spirit of the Very Reverend Pierre Julien Eymard, Founder and first Superior General of the Congregation of the Fathers of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

They enunciate the grand mystery of the life of Jesus Christ in souls regenerated by grace, and the life of faithful souls in Jesus Christ by Baptism: *In Me manet, et Ego in illo*. They indicate at the same time the principal means, the most powerful cause, and even the term of this mutual life, the bond of this union, the place of this mutual abiding, namely, the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Communion: *Qui manducat Me*.

Every Christian is called to this sublime destiny. If he solidly establishes his dwelling in Jesus Christ

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and preserves it from the destruction which Satan, the world, and the flesh are constantly plotting against it, he is a perfect Christian; and on the day that ushers him forever into that blessed abode, he is one of the elect, he is a saint of heaven.

I venture to say, and I hope to prove it by facts, that Père Eymard realized this program of the perfect life in a remarkable manner, in rare plenitude, with eminent superiority. He realized it very exactly, under the conditions proposed by the words of Jesus Christ quoted above. It was by the Eucharist that he abode in Jesus Christ, and it was the Eucharistic Christ who shone forth in him. The Eucharist sanctified him. His whole life, all his thoughts, his efforts, his enterprises, all his works invariably tended to the Eucharist: *In Me manet*. But in return, and by a sort of consequence and necessary effect, which was also a recompense, the Eucharist abode in him. It shone forth in his words, It was manifested in his conduct. Jesus hidden in the Sacrament seems to have chosen and prepared him that He might manifest Himself in him: *Et Ego in illo*.

But by what means did Père Eymard reach the point of turning all his interior and exterior life toward the Eucharist? How did the Eucharist manifest Itself in him? This is what it behooves us to know in order to judge correctly and to understand the life of this good servant of the Blessed Sacrament.

Now, I think I am able to say that the Father's dominant virtue, that which bound all the others together, governed his life, and introduced him into the sanctuary of the Eucharist in which he lived, was faith, the gift of faith which God had so largely im-

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parted to him, and which he cultivated with constant and courageous fidelity. The reflection of the Eucharist shining forth in him was kindness, goodness, that first fruit of the Sacrament of Love, Its most sensible characteristic. Faith led him to the Eucharist and sanctified him. The kindness with which the Eucharist had, as it were, impregnated him, was the secret of his apostolic action. These two characteristics, faith and goodness, best portray, according to my way of thinking, the cause of his own sanctity and the influence which he exercised over so many souls. In due proportion, I hesitate not to apply to him the eulogium of Moses made by the Holy Spirit: *In fide et lenitate ipsius sanctum fecit illum*—He sanctified him in his faith and meekness. It was his faith and meekness that sanctified him. His faith rendered him dear to God: *Dilectus Deo*; his goodness, dear to men: *et hominibus*; and therefore, his memory is held in benediction: *Cujus memoria in benedictione est*—blessed and preserved faithfully, blessed and honored universally, blessed and invoked like that of a friend of God, *Cujus memoria in benedictione est*.

*He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him.* How did Père Eymard come to abide in the Eucharist and to live of Its virtue? By his faith, but faith taken in its widest extent. Commentators explaining the praise given by the Holy Spirit to the faith of Moses, say that we must understand by this word *faith* three grand virtues, which are like three phases, the three degrees of this theological virtue: faith, properly so called, confidence, and fidelity. It is, first, the gift of faith, the opening, the marvelous facility of the soul to believe

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the divine word which teaches, and the mysteries that it reveals. It is what is denominated believing in God, *fides*. And when this faith carries a soul by a secret and constant guidance toward some particular mystery, it imparts a more lively understanding of it. It gives rise to the attraction, the dominant attraction, a sort of hunger, superior appetite, holy need, which is satisfied only by the profound study, the contemplation, ever more and more clear, of the object which captivates and enchants it.

Faith is, again, confidence in the word of God who promises. It is an intimate assurance in the divine fidelity which fills the soul with courage to undertake the works that God shows it, and with steadfastness in sustaining the difficulties encountered in them. It is to believe in God with that faith which Saint Paul so magnificently eulogizes in his Epistle to the Hebrews, when he shows it sustaining the hope of the Patriarchs in the promise of salvation through the long delay of centuries, and in the midst of the most cruel trials: *fiducia*.

Lastly, perfect faith is the fidelity of the Christian to conform during his whole life to the divine word which lays down the precepts that must be followed, as well as reveals the truths that must be believed. Perfect faith is, also, practical fidelity, interior and exterior, in living according to what we believe, in delivering one's self wholly to God. It is faith necessarily bound to love, purifying the conscience and sanctifying the whole life: *fidelitas*.

It was by this triple bond that Père Eymard was attached to the Eucharist: the faith of adhesion, for he believed in the Eucharist by a dominant attraction;



confidence, for he believed so firmly in the Eucharist that he did not shrink from undertaking great works; fidelity, for his life was but the practical conclusion and expression of his faith in the thrice-holy Mystery. The simple recital of facts will demonstrate the truth of what I here advance.

And first of all, God, who proportions and distributes His graces according to the divers services that He expects from His creatures, had planted in his soul a gift of eminent faith, which manifested itself in the aurora of his life by a powerful attraction to the Eucharist. As soon as his inward eyes were opened they were fixed upon the door of the tabernacle, and, we may say, never after turned away from it. He was only four or five years old when, after a long search for him, both in and out of the house, he was discovered kneeling on a stool behind the main altar of the parish church, his hands joined, his eyes raised to the tabernacle. "What are you doing there?" asked his anxious sister. "I am near Jesus." "And why did you climb so high?" "I hear Him better!" Perhaps a year before this touching episode, he had already said to his sister: "You are very happy to go to Communion so often! Go once for me." "And what shall I ask for you?" "Ask that I may be very gentle, very pure, and that some day I may be a priest!"

Two or three years later, filled with ardent desire to compassionate the meek Victim of the altar, he put a rope around his neck and, barefoot, a candle in his hand, went to repeat an Act of Reparation to the Prisoner of love. He thought himself alone in the church, but he was seen, and laughed at.

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After his First Communion the desire for frequent Communion was excited in him like a hunger. At that period it was seldom permitted to children, but by force of entreaties he obtained it. For it he had made a pilgrimage on foot of over twenty leagues to Our Lady of Laus, in the neighborhood of Gap. When scarcely thirteen, he communicated faithfully every eight days.

The Visit and Communion were not enough for his Eucharistic attraction. There is a state that is consecrated to the Eucharist, and as soon as Père Eymard knew himself he sighed after the priesthood. To be the minister, the official servant of the Blessed Sacrament, daily to consecrate the Eucharist,—to this he felt drawn by that superior form of attraction called vocation. There are no prayers, no vows, no pilgrimages that he did not make to assure to himself the divine election; no efforts that he did not attempt, no labors that he did not sustain, no difficulties that he did not surmount in order to be faithful. He had to struggle against the obstinate tenderness of a father who, for seven years, opposed his vocation, keeping him at home, subjecting him to rough labor, and ever on the watch to prevent his studying. At last, in order the better to reach the end which ravished his soul, he accepted the position of sacristan in the house of a priest from whom he could receive some idea of Latin. After a time, a holy missionary of the Oblates of Mary, afterward Cardinal Archbishop of Paris (1), succeeded in obtaining for him what he had so long desired, his father's permission to enter the priesthood.

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(1) . His Eminence Cardinal Guibert.

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It was then that he gave free course to his Eucharistic passion. His sister, an eye-witness, tells us of the two hours he used to spend in the church before his Mass, and of his thanksgiving, also two hours long; of his lengthy visits in the evening; of his constant recourse to that Jesus whom he knew living in the Sacrament, to whom he turned as to a Friend, whom he consulted as a Guide in every undertaking, and under whose eyes he conceived and formulated every project of his pastoral zeal. He was truly the Priest of the Eucharist. He had already attracted souls to It by frequent Communion, not at all common at this epoch of 1834, which with difficulty escaped from the icy vapors of the Jensenistic fog which then enveloped theological teaching.

Père Eymard spent seventeen years as a Marist religious, his Eucharistic passion increasing all the time. He passed before the Blessed Sacrament every moment he could snatch from the various charges with which he was entrusted. When the day kept him far from his dear tabernacle, he indemnified himself for it at night. He preached the Eucharist in season and out of season. It was his favorite theme, and he was soon surnamed in Lyons where, above all, his zeal was called into play, the *Father of the Blessed Sacrament*. In 1845 he wrote in his private notes, which reveal the state of his soul: "I had the ineffable happiness to-day of carrying the Most Blessed Sacrament to Saint-Paul, and my soul was well satisfied. It was filled with faith and love for Jesus Hostia. Those two hours seemed to me but an instant. What sighs! what tears! How my heart was under the wine-press, and I would have wished to have in it all the hearts in

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the world, in order to give them to Jesus! Never before was my attraction toward the Eucharist so strong. It urges me in direction, in preaching, to bring all souls to the love of Our Lord, and to preach only Jesus and Jesus Eucharistic. . . . That is settled. It will henceforth be the object of all my prayers, all my desires. I take Saint Paul, that great friend of Our Lord, for my patron in this new apostolate. O my God, what happiness if I should deserve to hear from Thy lips those words spoken to St. Thomas, the Angelic Doctor: 'Thou has spoken well of Me, O Pierre.' . . . Thou knowest, O my God, my prayer during Thy triumph! I repeated it so often! Oh, how much good it has done me!"

We know the object of this prayer. Priest and Religious, but especially a Religious missionary, so often snatched away by his apostolic labors from his favorite devotion, he began to ask himself whether there was not some kind of life which would entirely consecrate him to that Eucharist toward which he felt himself so imperiously drawn. This new life it pleased God to reveal to him and to make of him its initiator. I shall tell you presently how this was done and at the price of what sacrifices; but to depict to you the faith of this Father of the Eucharist, come, study him in his vocation of adorer of the Most Blessed Sacrament. That moment witnessed the full development of his faith, the entire satisfaction of his attraction. He is all to the Blessed Sacrament, the Blessed Sacrament is all to him, the Blessed Sacrament in the most solemn manifestation of Its Presence here below, *Exposition*. The Church had vowed him by profession to the service of the Eucharist; he consecrated himself a perpetual adorer.

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Behold him at his *prie-Dieu*! What respect! He adores—what noble and manly bearing! He mounts guard—what peace in his glance, and upon his lips what an expression of sweetness! He entertains himself with the Well-Beloved! He does not read, he does not put himself to any trouble; he merely gazes, contemplates. He clings to the Sacred Host, he gives himself to It. Discovering by faith Its infinite perfections and Its still greater loveliness, he adores and acknowledges them. Calling to mind the hour of the Last Supper, and thinking of the goodness, the kindness with which the Heart of Him who is there before him overflowed for his own love and that of the whole world, he thanks Him for it. The abasement of this august Victim, man's ingratitude toward Him, move his soul, veil his eyes with sadness, and sometimes fill them with tears. He consoles, he compassionates, he repairs. Suddenly, the desire of the glory of this hidden King inflames his zeal. He sighs for His kingdom and demands it earnestly. He prays, he intercedes for all the sacred causes that keep Jesus in His Sacrament. Such was the Father's adoration. Behold his fundamental rule and his method of prayer: adoration, thanksgiving, reparation, intercession. These are the *four ends of the Eucharistic Sacrifice*. He will model on it all the mysteries and all the virtues. And this way surely led him, without turn or delay, to the Eucharistic Mystery, to that Centre where his faith and attraction, and henceforth his vocation and duty, retained him without share or division.

Shall I recall the gentle majesty of his bearing, the unction of his voice, that pleasing union of simplicity and nobility in the sacred ceremonies? Who ever

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assisted at his Mass without experiencing an impression of extraordinary edification? He said it with so much dignity and sweet piety! His faith pierced the Eucharistic cloud and did not permit him to forget for a single instant that, all hidden as He willed to keep Himself under the humble veil of the Sacred Species, Jesus Christ was not less the King of Kings, and the Eucharist the throne of His glory here below.

And his preaching! Ah! when he had become official apostle of the Blessed Sacrament,—as he was Its adorer;—with what fidelity he preached the Eucharist, and nothing but the Eucharist! The depth of this Mystery, Its institution, Its motives, Its state, the lessons that It gives, the fruits that are drawn from It, the relations that It preserves with the Saviour's mortal life, the advantages that It confers on the Church, the consolations, the strength, the help of every kind that the Faithful find on approaching It, frequent Communion,—what did he say of all this? He had but one word on his lips as but one faith in his mind, and one single love in his heart,—the Eucharist, the adorable Person of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. And that word, which he repeated for twelve years, captivated those that heard it, and led them with marvelous authority to devotion toward the Blessed Sacrament. They used to say: "This man speaks of the Eucharist under the dictation of the Holy Spirit." And they who read the notes gathered from his sermons could not restrain their admiration for the depth of thought, the sweetness of sentiment, the simplicity of style which recounts what their author saw, what he experienced before the living Sacrament. Spoken or written, his word is light and tenderness!

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Such was the faith of the Priest of the Eucharist—one view steady and clear, one attraction unique and dominant. It was to produce a heroic confidence in the power of the great Mystery, and to lead him to labor courageously for Its glory. And that is what he did. One day, February 2, 1851, when he had spent several hours at the feet of Notre-Dame de Fourvière, absorbed in the thought of the Blessed Sacrament, he heard in the depths of his heart a voice saying to him: "All the mysteries of my Son have a Religious Order whose special end is to honor them. The Eucharist has none. It must have one." These words were pronounced with precision that left no doubt, with authority that allowed no hesitation. Père Eymard promised to form a religious body entirely consecrated to the service of the Eucharist.

What should it be? What name, what rule, what kind of life? All this was still undecided and uncertain. Five years of reflection, study, prayer, and suffering revealed it to him. But this foundation will arise from the faith of Père Eymard in the Eucharist, and his faith alone will sustain him to a successful issue.

If the Blessed Sacrament is God Himself perpetually present here below, ought It not to be adored perpetually? If It is the Christ crowned, He who acquired, by the humiliations of the Incarnation and the sufferings of the Passion, the exaltation of His name, the glory of His Humanity, and the right to reign over angels and men, why should He not have on this earth, as well as in heaven, a magnificent throne, a court of attendants wholly attached to His august Person? In fine, if the Eucharist is Jesus perpetuat-



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ing through time and space His mission of Saviour, if It is the greatest and most powerful means of salvation, this apostolate of Our Lord ought to be seconded, and His Eucharist spread throughout the whole world. These three thoughts, so simple, so true,—these logical conclusions deduced by Père Eymard from what faith discovered to him in the Eucharist, are the bases of the Society of the Priests of the Most Blessed Sacrament which he founded, which is his work, and the fruits of his whole life.

To the Divine Person of Jesus he gave for throne the solemn Exposition surrounded by all the riches and the pomp of worship; to His abiding Presence, perpetual Adoration day and night; to His mission of salvation, the Eucharistic apostolate. He vowed the members of his Congregation to solemn Exposition, to perpetual Adoration, to the Eucharistic apostolate; and the three Works make but one whole, which the Venerable Founder designates by this one word,—sacramental on his lips,—the service of the Most Blessed Sacrament. To this service they should consecrate all that they do and all that they have, their graces and their virtues, their labors and their talents, their time and their health, all, all, reserving nothing for themselves. They are servants—that said, all is said! We see that this work of Père Eymard, in its end and in its means, comes from the understanding he had of the excellence and the rights of the Eucharist. But just here, we may surmise what confidence the Venerable Eymard must have had to establish such an Institution.

In its end, it is a Work essentially supernatural, a Work of pure faith. Nothing like it had yet been

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attempted in the Church. There was question of creating a Chartreuse in the midst of the world, a Thebaid in the most populous cities. There had to be priests ready to sacrifice the inexhaustible fecundity, the mighty ardor of their sacerdotal zeal in the silence of daily and nocturnal Adoration. These men would also be apostles, it is true but that was for the Founder one difficulty more. He would have to reconcile the exigencies of zeal with the service of perpetual Adoration, the first and sovereign obligation of the Religious of the Blessed Sacrament. He would have to balance things in such a way that the preoccupations of the holy ministry would not disturb the interior peace demanded by contemplation.

And the means, the helps,—where are they? The Founder went to Paris to establish his Work. It was in the very heart of France, in its capital city, that he designed to raise the throne of his King of Love. He would surround Him with brilliant lights of only the purest wax. He would offer to the Eucharist, which contains the Master of nature, only the natural flowers of the garden, in all the beauty and perfume with which His own magnificence was pleased to adorn them. Père Eymard's aspirations were all on the grandest scale: churches of marble, altars of gold, all the riches, all the sumptuousness, all the art, all the magnificence that could be displayed in them. He thought that Jesus ought to receive in His royal pomp of Exposition every royal homage. This appeared to him only just, worthy, proper; this is what the Eucharist deserves, and what we owe It. Yes, but he has no means. He knows no one in the great city, he is absolutely destitute of protection, of support. Faith

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suffices for him. If the Eucharist deserves this homage, let us give it. Jesus Hostia will Himself furnish the means. So does he reason. And so he came, he began, and he went on for twenty years as he had foreseen! But you know those triumphs of faith are gained only at the cost of painful struggles. Their merit consists precisely in being bought at a great price,—poverty, want, anxiety for the morrow, all that poverty entails, and the agony of uncertainty. All this Père Eymard experienced, often and long. But his faith sustained him. He had confidence in the opportunities of grace and in his own mission, which Pius IX had blessed; and so he went on, his eyes fixed upon the Host exposed, his Hope, his Light, his Strength, his Recompense, the only one that he craved!

To material difficulties were naturally joined moral obstacles, raised up by Satan and the world. Not without supreme vexation could the former behold a Work which, by exalting his Conqueror, at once recalled his own defeat and perpetuated it by offering to souls the most powerful of all means of salvation. He who is familiar with the history of religious foundations knows with what cunning and obstinacy, with what perfidious means and violent attacks, with what indomitable tenacity and inveterate hatred Satan opposes them. Père Eymard's faith triumphed in this formidable struggle. Satan fought against him, the Eucharist sustained him, the Eucharist bore away the victory!

I shall say nothing of the evil world. In our days, its pleasures absorb it, and it takes little note of works begun in the shade. It is only when they have taken

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shape and oppose themselves to its social action that it arms itself against them, first with its sarcasm and, if that is powerless, with its laws and tribunals. Still in its cradle at the time of his death, Père Eymard's Work had not the honor of crossing swords with the world at large during his lifetime. I shall not say as much of the pious world. It pleases God that His works should be combated even by those who ought to support them, and that the most painful blows, obstacles the most difficult to overcome should frequently arise from "those of one's own household," as says the Gospel. Père Eymard was attempting a new Work. What objections it roused among those who loved only what has *always been done!* He had to quit a Society in which he was held in honor, and in which they had vowed him affection that he returned with usury! And what presumption to renounce a certain and well-regulated good in order to tempt fortune and the following out of ideas which, however beautiful, were not the more sure! . . . Vocations came very slowly. Père Eymard felt all that isolation and abandonment have in them most cruel. Ah! through how many deaths, and through what deaths must God's works and His workmen pass! You were witness of this, M. Lagarde, and you were pleased to be the Cyrenean of our Founder upon the way of his rude Calvary. We know it. He told us, and our gratitude to you is daughter of that which he held for you. You would be able to tell us of his courage in the midst of that martyrdom. Again, his humble memoranda, written from day to day, reveal to us his sufferings: "Lord Jesus, my soul is sorrowful even to desolation and tears!" "Lord, I suffer violence. Answer for me!"

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But his faith and confidence soon rise to the surface: "Good Jesus, save us, we perish! The only recourse that remains to us is to fix our suppliant eyes upon Thee!" "Yes, good Master, when and how Thou dost will!" "O King of Love, I shall conquer by love!" Supported upon the Eucharist as upon the unshaken anchor of his hope, he rose above every tempest. His faith was victorious over the world and Satan, over difficulties from within and obstacles from without, "*Per fides vicerunt regna*—By faith they conquered kingdoms." And he saw the fruit of those promises which God makes in the depths of the heart of them whom He calls to the formidable mission of founder: "*Per fide vicerunt, adepti sunt repromissiones*—By faith they conquered kingdoms and obtained promises." When he died, his Congregation had for five years been approved by Holy Church.

It now remains to study the third character, the third degree and even this perfection of faith in Père Eymard's fidelity in living of the Eucharist. The faith of attraction is a gratuitous gift. Confidence itself might exist by the very power given by God to a man for the performance of some great work, though without sufficing to sanctify him. Faith and confidence are perfect and assured only when they strike deep roots in fidelity of life, and we can say that Père Eymard was truly faithful to the Eucharist. By this, I mean that he took from the Eucharist the model of his perfection, and that he aimed at constantly reproducing it in its interior life. And here you shall see how his life was one, always identical with itself, inspired by the Eucharist, and entirely referring to It. To sanctify one's self is to imitate Jesus Christ;

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to sanctify one's self by the Eucharist is to imitate Jesus in the Eucharist, that is, to reproduce as far as possible the state and manner of living, the spirit and virtues of Jesus in the Eucharist. For this, his faith showed him that the Eucharist ought to be the principle and the means, as well as the end of his sanctification.

The Principle.—Jesus Hostia is my model, the Divine Exemplar that I ought to reproduce in my life. Now, that which manifestly results from the Eucharistic state of Our Lord, that which characterizes Him, is the gift of self carried even to annihilation. To the mind as to the eye, to reason as to faith, the Eucharist presents Itself as the sovereign degree of the abasement of a God whom His love had already brought down so low in the Incarnation. There is neither splendor, nor sensible body, nor dimension, nor action, nor anything that constitutes the exterior life,—only the silence, the inertia of nothingness!

“Behold,” said Père Eymard, “my model always present, my grace always actual!” Behold to what I must come to resemble my Divine Exemplar by the gift and annihilation of my whole self! Without that, friendship is impossible, relations of service impossible. I should be a servant who wants to be more than his master, an adorer who would raise himself above his God. I should be in contradiction with Him who has sent me. And under the influence of this principle, Père Eymard made humility his dominant virtue. His whole aim was to efface himself both in the practice of virtue, as well as in the government of the Society. What do I say? After having written in his Rule this word which is, as it were, the axiom

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of Eucharistic sanctity, *Absque sui proprio*, he vowed the entire gift of his own personality to Our Lord. By it he pledged himself to be no longer anything, no longer to have anything out of Our Lord. This he expressed by the words: "*Nothing by self, nothing for self*. I must become an accident without being, like a consecrated species which has no longer any substance in it, but is entirely filled with Jesus, who alone sustains it and makes it exist."

As principle of his sanctification, the Eucharist was its means, that is, he placed the virtues of his sanctity in the accomplishment of his Eucharistic duties. To adore well with heart and body, to chant regularly and devoutly the praises of God, to keep himself constantly united to the Master continually exposed, to guard his purity, because His royal service demanded purity as its essential virtue, to keep the rules of modesty, the courtly etiquette of the Sacramental King, in a word, to practise all the religious virtues in the Eucharistic spirit, in order to clothe himself, as it were, with the proper livery exacted of every servant,—behold what I imply when I say that the Eucharist was the means of the Holy Founder's sanctity.

This will appear more clearly still when I say that the Eucharist alone was the end of his sanctity. He sanctified himself for It, labored, merited, suffered, for It alone, for Its service and glory. He wanted every virtue to be referred to that end. "Nothing for self," did he write in the formula of his vow. "All for the Blessed Sacrament." Here is how he understood this device: "Since I have given myself, consecrated by special vow my own personality, what I possess the most inalienable, the most intimate, to



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Jesus in the Eucharist, He should be all, receive all, be the end of everything in me. Hence I can no longer receive either honor or affection, or any good whatsoever, because in order to be honored and loved, in order to possess, it is necessary to be some one. Now, henceforth I am nothing more than a *thing* delivered to the will of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. To Him, to Him alone all glory! For Him every virtue, every labor, every suffering." Hence, his singular delicacy in effacing self, his constant attention to put Our Lord forward. He showed Him to souls, led them to Him, to nothing but Him, with fidelity as constant as it was ingenious. He possessed in a rare degree the science of disappearing and forgetting self. That is the purity of love. That is the regular and powerful tendency toward the Eucharist. That is the perfect glorification of the Eucharist, Its absolute reign in the soul: All for the Most Blessed Sacrament!

That is fidelity to a degree sufficient to make it, of necessity, sanctity. It unites to Our Lord, it permits abiding in Him, and these are the souls who solidly establish their dwelling in Jesus Christ. Père Eymard was one of these. Outside the Blessed Sacrament, he cared for nothing, had nothing, desired nothing. Outside of It, he put neither labor, nor virtue, nor joy, nor recompense. All entire and always, with all that he was, he abode in the Eucharist. It was in this consisted his fidelity, the third manifestation of his faith. It was by this his abiding in the Eucharist was accomplished. I have, then, good reason to say that his faith led him to the Eucharist, and established him in It. It remains for me to show how the Eucharist

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abode in Père Eymard, and this shall be the object of my second part.

*He that eateth Me abideth in Me.* We have seen the Father establishing by faith His abode in the Eucharist. We must now show the Eucharist abiding in the Father and manifesting Itself by him: *Et Ego in illo.*

It is a truth taught by experience that we become like to the things we love. This law of the moral order governs our supernatural loves also. We take on the features and likeness of Our Lord in the measure of our greater love for Him. But as we can not reproduce the full perfection of this Divine Model, grace presents it under various aspects; it shines out more for each one or other of His mysteries, for such or such of His virtues, so that devotion to the different states of the Son of God is the foundation of the diversity of vocations and the admirable variety of the exquisite flowers which adorn the garden of the Church, and which are called the saints. The character of each mystery is reproduced in him who gives himself up to its study and practice. It impresses its likeness on his soul. It reflects on him its own light. The saints are but mirrors that the Holy Spirit multiplies with the desire to reproduce the virtues and the states of Jesus, the infinite Type of all holiness. The love of the Passion makes the Saints Francis and the Saints John of the Cross, who crucify themselves on the Cross of their Master, replacing the executioners and the nails by the holy austerities of penance and the thirst for humiliations. Their long watchings at the crib in company with the Virgin Mary, the humble Joseph and the shepherds, impress on their soul and

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spread over their whole life the spirit of Christian infancy, of simplicity and abandonment, which is the perfection of humility. The Infant Jesus makes infants of grace, just as Jesus on the Cross makes the crucified.

Père Eymard was devoted by attraction and vocation to the Eucharist. This mystery had, then, according to this invariable law, to reproduce in him Its dominant character and Its essential quality. Now, it will not be necessary to seek long for arguments nor to prove in many words that the Eucharist is love, goodness, ineffable condescension. From whatever point of view we may consider It, in Its inmost nature, in Its spirit and Its influence, in Its appearances and whatever constitutes Its manner of exterior existence, It is love, and nothing but love; *Amor amorum*, says Saint Thomas after Saint Bernard.

It is love in Its principle and Its essence, for It was instituted in an excess of love in which the Heart of Jesus exhausted Itself. It is the Gift, the total, universal, perpetual Gift, the absolute Gift, and nothing but a Gift. A gift is essentially love.

The Eucharist is love in Its action and in Its spirit. It produces love just as It rouses and attracts it. It operates only in those that love, and Its essential virtue is to produce in them love for God and love of the neighbor, two branches of one and the same root.

Lastly, Its external character, Its state itself, what It allows to be seen and by which It manifests Itself, is love and goodness: silence, loving patience, meekness, and condescending kindness.

Père Eymard was so identified with the Eucharist that his heart and mind, as well as his exterior,

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breathed nothing but kindness. He has written in some place: "The saints who reflect something of Our Lord's kindness are the rays that prove His existence, just as the sun's rays herald the presence of the luminary of day." And so the Father was a ray of the Eucharist, a gentle and beneficent beam of that Sun of Love which is hidden under the veils of the bread.

Let us speak first of his exterior kindness. It will introduce us into his heart, where the bounteous stream of his charity had its source.

We say at once that the distinctive note in Père Eymard's countenance was kindness. It shone on his face, it spoke by his words, it sounded in his greeting. His face bore the reflection of that supernatural joy, a gift and quality at the same time, which soared above the variations of character and the thousand incidents of life. It emanated from the depths of his soul and expanded in serenity on his countenance, as the perfume rises from the stalk and envelops the flower. Its roots were in the peace of a pure conscience and the simplicity of a filial and absolute abandonment to the holy will of God. He cultivated this joy for the honor of his Master, saying that he must "show himself satisfied with God, and pay Him the honor of a joyous service." He cultivated it for those that approached him, knowing well that "as dew upon the grass so is the cheerfulness of a king." It opens the soul of the subject and disposes it for the seeds of grace. The very sight of him spread joy, and his presence brought peace. One had only to approach him in order to gather these two fruits of charity: "*Fructus spiritus charitas, pax,*

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*gaudium*—The fruit of the Spirit is charity, peace, joy," says Saint Paul. No one ever left him without being cheered, restored to peace, and impelled to exclaim: "Oh! how good is the good God!" His glance was full of kindness. Intelligence, keenness, energy sparkled in it, but tempered by a mingling of indulgence and benevolence, by a veil of modesty and candor, which gave him the frank look of a child. This gracious expression greatly diminished what might have been a little too austere in his large, angular features. To the close of his life, when the fire of physical suffering and pain of soul, stirred up by endless trials, had engraven wrinkles on his brow, hollowed his eyes, and wasted his cheeks, that kind and limpid sweetness of his look remained. I shall say that it adorned him. That God-sickness, which we call divine nostalgia, illumined him with a most intense celestial ray,—and then, too, a father's eyes that have wept much are so beautiful!

His speech was sweet and melodious with inflections full of tenderness. It captivated, it charmed. It knew no bursts of anger, abrupt expressions of impatience, the haughty curtness of the man who knows his own importance and despises other men. Oh! how good it was to the soul in affliction when it fell, drop by drop, on the wound, like perfumed oil, to calm, to console, to encourage!

The Father's greeting was kind and affable. His gracious smile, tempered by supernatural reserve and modesty, gained one. He always began by addressing some kind words to his visitor, which put the most timid at ease and opened hesitating lips. He inquired into all that touched him with earnestness so charitable

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and interest so real that, from the very first, he felt that he was all his own. He treated every one—the young, the ignorant, the poor above all, for whom he did not conceal his preference—with that Christian politeness, that harmonious mingling of respect, humility, and charity, which never fails to recognize and honor Jesus Christ Himself in the most obscure of His members. He possessed the great gift of forgetting self to think only of those with whom he treated, and this was true, natural, sincere, as the supernatural charity from which it sprang: “*Charitas non quærit quæ sua sunt*—Charity seeketh not her own.”

Nor was he ever anxious to end an affair. However long the interviews, however exacting and at times, importunate applicants might be, he heard all, tried to satisfy all, and when he had promised his concurrence,—which we may say he never refused,—he spared neither time nor trouble in going and coming, in attempts and petitions for the clients of his kind heart. His note-books are filled with their names, also those of the generous protectors, great personages for the most part, before whom he never would have appeared excepting to interest them in favor of his dear protégés.

Thus did he freely give himself to all, and certainly it was not without often feeling the sharp thorn of sacrifice, but he used to say so simply: “Our Lord hires me by the day, and not by the job!” And, again, to them who wanted to protect him from the ever-increasing crowd by fixing special hours for such business, he said: “But Our Lord had no hours! He always received! Am I not His servant? And if the

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Master receives at any hour, I, too, should be always ready to answer in His name!" "But they burden you with nothings!" "Oh, nothings! They who confide them to me look upon them, no doubt, as things of great importance!" The parlor of his house was a kind of ante-chamber to the chapel where the servant, after the example of his King, consumed himself to render service, showing himself, like the God of the Host, meek, benevolent, patient, and condescending toward all: *Charitas benigna est, patiens est!*

Père Eymard's exterior kindness was not the commonplace sign of a happy disposition, nor an assumed attitude to gain sympathy. It was the fruit of the supernatural charity that filled his heart. His, according to the energetic words of the Apostle, were "bowels of mercy," and the constant meditation of Our Lord's gentleness in the Eucharist, the faithful reception of that divine honey which he tasted every day had formed for him a heart at once loving, grateful, and generous.

He loved ardently and tenderly. We know of his intense sorrow on the death of his mother, which could be mitigated only by his consecration to Mary, in whom he thought to find another mother. He loved his sister, also, with deep affection. But on the day of the divine call he knew how to leave her courageously, to walk in the suite of the Master, though ever preserving for her a devoted, constant, and tender love. We saw him plunged in anxiety, in sorrow, intense and almost agitated, when, during an illness of that dear sister, the physician did not send him the daily bulletin his love for her so earnestly demanded. He knew also how to love as the saints



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love—that is, to sacrifice the joys of friendship while preserving its tenderness and devotedness.

He ardently loved France, his native country, and in that country the mountainous and picturesque region that had given him birth and where he had passed his childhood. He used to speak of it with a touch of pride and a certain simple enthusiasm that was not without charm.

All the souls whom God had confided to him and whom he had brought forth to grace or to a more perfect life he loved deeply, and spent himself for their good with a generosity, disinterestedness, and devotedness that they could never forget. He was their father in every sense of the word, fulfilling all the duties that title entails. He was their father, as a vigilant guide, generous protector, courageous defender. He truly bore them in his heart, and gave himself up without reserve to the service of Our Lord in them. Their joys and sorrows, their spiritual and temporal affairs, their relatives and friends,—he interested himself in all, loved all, assumed his share of everything, of prayer, sacrifice, and devotedness. They were in peace when they had confided to him their weightiest secrets, their most trying cares, their most delicate difficulties. After having employed every means that the most charitable heart could suggest to console them, they knew that he would continue at the foot of the Throne of Grace his office of consoler, becoming their advocate and security to divine justice. He felt so keenly the afflictions of others that it affected his health. One day, after having received distressing confidence and seen distressing misery, he exclaimed: "Oh! it is too much! I shall die!"

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The sight of poor sinners, the sorrows of the Sovereign Pontiff, the crimes committed against the august Sacrament,—all pierced deeply into his soul and tortured his heart as with a sharp-edged sword. Charity and compassion condemned him to almost continual suffering, which in the last years of his life became a true martyrdom, and to this principally we must attribute his premature death.

The tender and loving heart of the Venerable Father was very sensible to affection and unalterably grateful. "I have never had any one to attach himself to me, that is, to do me some service," he used to say. "I should, without doubt, have loved him too much!" He was truly far above all personal research. He had even a somewhat haughty and abrupt manner in the case of services and benefits, and he felt humbled when people tried to gain his esteem or affection by presents or obsequiousness. He took as much care to disengage himself from such things as a soul less elevated would have used to gain them. But for all that was done for his Royal Master he with noble eagerness acknowledged himself the debtor, and sought by every means to show his gratitude. "When they give to Our Lord," he again said in his energetic language, "I know not what I can do to thank them worthily in His name. I would give everything I have, even my *shoes!*" The benefactors of the Society, if any are here present, . . . will not deny what I say, that it was one of the purest joys of their life to have in some way been useful to this man of God, who was at the same time so much a man of *heart!*

The Father was as great as he was generous, as

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loyal as he was tender and grateful. He possessed a chivalrous heart. He naturally and obstinately believed in honesty. He wanted to behold his neighbor only in the true and pure mirror of his own heart. He was extremely unwilling to see evil. He yielded only to evidence, and then his indulgence made him excuse the intentions. Deceit often made use of this to gain easy victories over his upright and simple good-heartedness. He saw these triumphs without personal resentment, merely pitied them who gained them, and met them with the same kindness and indulgence as before. Like Saint Peter in his extreme generosity, it was not only seven times, but seventy times seven times that he pardoned. He declared himself absolutely ignorant of envy, jealousy, and those rivalries that exist, alas! even among the most zealous workmen of the Divine Master. He rejoiced greatly in the success of others, believing that all gifts come from God, and that all success builds up the body of Christ and crowns His head with glory. Lastly, to finish the picture of the goodness of this heart, so like to the Heart of the Saviour in the Sacrament of all goodness, we can not do better than borrow the words by which Saint Paul enumerates the qualities of the truly Eucharistic: *"Charity is patient, is kind. Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."*

I come now to Père Eymard's excellent mind. This is the perfection of supernatural goodness. To be good in mind is to add to exterior benevolence and

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goodness of heart the solidity of conviction and the power of principle. He had drawn the evidence of this principle and formed this conviction from his rare understanding of the Eucharist on the one side, and his deep knowledge of the supernatural order on the other. He saw that this Mystery, the grandest of all, the soul of the Church, and the source of every virtue, is love alone acting only through love. From this he concluded that he ought to make use of this instrument which the Church confided to him in a very special manner, according to its nature and aptitude. He resolved to make of the heart the basis of all soul-sanctification, and of love the means of every spiritual work and every virtue. In order to attain this end, he employed teaching and experience. It will not be without profit to watch him applying this principle theoretically and practically to his instruction and direction of souls.

He fearlessly became the preacher of love. His whole apostolate may be summarized in his showing forth under all its aspects the grand mystery of love, in unfolding the pages of the infinite book of the Host, whereon are engraven in characters of blood and fire these words alone: "*Sic dilexit.*" If we run through his written notes, we find only this word: "The love of the Eucharist,—in Its perpetuity,—in Its manner of existence;—goodness and condescension of the Eucharistic veil,—love of obedience, of abasement, the annihilation of Jesus in the Sacrament." This word was incessantly on his lips, because he was convinced that all the power of the Eucharist lies in the infinite expenditure of love and goodness that It makes for men. He believed himself bound by his vocation to preach only that love, and when he touched

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upon other subjects, it was the goodness of God shining forth from them that he tried, above all, to proclaim. To his disciples, whose vocation is to propagate his teaching, he left this fundamental maxim: "Solidly to establish the Christian soul in Our Lord, and there make it rise from ascension to ascension; to aim at nourishing it with His truth and the infinite goodness of His love, so that light may conduct it, as is just, to love, and love to all the virtues."

This principle he applied in the sanctification of his Religious and of the souls confided to him by the Divine Goodness. "The holiness of our Religious," he says, "ought to be founded entirely upon the law of divine love, the love of Jesus sacramental,—behold their law and their supreme virtue! It is love that ought to lead them to all the combats, to all the sacrifices that the acquisition of the virtues demands." We love to quote him. This doctrine is so fundamental a trait in his character, and it expresses so well his mind as a director and superior that we should betray ignorance of the Father were we to leave it in the shade, did we treat it as a secondary thing, as a simple, common trait of his spiritual physiognomy. Again, he says: "The spirit in which we ought to serve Our Lord, sanctify ourselves, and devote ourselves to works of zeal, ought to be the same spirit of love which led Our Lord to institute the Eucharist and which perpetuates this Gift of Himself throughout the ages for the glory of God and the salvation of the world." "The Eucharistic love,—behold what ought to be the sovereign law of all our virtues, the theme of our zeal, and the distinctive character of our perfection." Commence, then, by awakening love in souls.

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Touch them by the consideration of God's infinite goodness, a goodness which shines forth in a thousand admirable traits in the life of every man, and which is called the goodness that creates us, that conserves us, that preserves us, and the still greater goodness that restores us, converts us, and gives back to us all the goods that we have lost. And when the soul had seen in her own life the touching, multiplied, persevering proofs of the infinite goodness of God, when the sight penetrated and softened her, then the Father invariably put to her this practical question: "In return for so much love will you not love? And if you love, will you not give up sin, Will you not renounce your guilty or earthly affections? Will you not change your life? Will you not struggle against your defects? Will you not rise out of your tepidity? Will you not make this sacrifice? Lastly, to Him who gives you all, and even Himself, will you not also give yourself entirely by a just return and a necessary consequence?"

Behold the principle, the line of spiritual conduct that the Father always followed toward souls. He applied it wisely, knowing how to vary it according to their state, their intelligence, and their divers needs. But he always went first to the heart; and it was from the heart that he caused to spring every return, every conversion, all progress and perfection. For him love was the beginning, the middle, and the end. The spiritual exercises which he has left, and which he made his penitents follow, are established on this plan.

I have said that the Eucharistic light had revealed it to him. I add that he drew it, also, from his profound knowledge of the true laws of the human heart

and of Christianity. What is at the very depths of man's being, if not his heart? Life is in the heart. From the heart flows all life; and the education, the attentive care, the vigilant guard which the Holy Spirit recommends to be exercised over the heart,—is it anything else than the directing and governing of its affections? What is true in the single point of reason shines with new light in the splendors of faith. What is grace excepting love, love created and perfected which penetrates into the soul and impregnates its substance, dwelling therein, permanently adhering therein, and manifesting itself by acts of the various supernatural virtues? What is grace excepting the condition of a personal, substantial, and wholly intimate presence in our soul of the Holy Spirit Himself? Not to our merits is given this double love. It is not the recompense of a long life of labor and holiness; no, it is the endowment of every being on entering into the Christian family, the heritage that every baptized child receives, the instrument of its future labor, the capital of all profits for heaven that it will make. Baptism makes us children of the family. It gives us love, the spirit of love, the words of love, the aptitude of love. To appeal to love for the sanctification of souls, to rouse dormant love, to fan the flames of a love that has grown tepid, to hurry it away on the wings of a love that darts willingly and fearlessly toward all sacrifices; in a word, to conduct and sanctify by love, is a sure principle, a logical way, a superior understanding of the real needs of the soul and of the conditions of Christianity. This was the Father's invariable method. It was from love that he demanded conversion and the destruction of



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sin, the necessary fear and the correction of defects, the acquisition of virtues and the heroism of sacrifice: "If Christ has loved us so much, let us love Him in return!" This is the cry of Saint Paul's holiness, the device that he adopted and the plan that he ever aimed at following. It is his spirit.

Then, again, with what delicacy, with what patience the Father treated souls! He knew that it is little for love to be a father if it is not a mother also; that the essential qualities of every real education are longanimity and invincible patience; that love ought to hope all, bear with all, while awaiting the buds and fruits that it has sown; that it ought, above all and solely, to seek the good, the interests of him for whom it is caring, generously sacrificing itself in the meantime. It knows that if twenty years are necessary for a mother to rear a man, God needs a whole lifetime to make a saint, and that the duty of the "*God visible*," of the spiritual Father, is to labor during that whole lifetime to assure the divine work which is incessantly menaced and often ruined; to follow grace. step by step, without indiscreetly urging it on and without going before it; to pause when it pauses; to raise it up every time it falls; in a word, to treat the soul with that love, kindness, condescension, patience, reserve and, as the Scripture says, "*that respect*" which God Himself employs toward His creatures. It knows all this, and it religiously follows these educational laws of the Divine Goodness. It discerns at the first step what each one is able to accomplish, and it demands nothing beyond his strength. It rather stands aside, in order to give to the soul the joy of doing more than it exacts, and thus exciting its love

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by the sight of its own generosity. It lends a most attentive ear to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in the soul, and when grace is silent it waits,—with what patience, what merciful condescension! They who have had the benefit of Père Eymard's direction know it. He used to say: "To wish to advance more quickly than the good God is imprudence. It is not for us to give grace. What can we do over the will, over the soul, if God does not act interiorly? You see the defects of those whom you conduct, but if they themselves do not see them by the divine light, in vain do you point them out to them. Pray, beg grace for them. Take notice that it is not the man, but Our Lord who sanctifies, so do not usurp His place!" Again, he said: "What the love of Our Lord can not accomplish give up! What Our Lord has not been able to do, do you think you can do? And should you get it by force, what would Our Lord gain by it?"

What abnegation, disinterestedness, and true devotedness such discreet conduct of souls demands may be readily understood. Love alone can inspire it, alone can make one persevere therein. This was the ruling quality of the Father's direction, and by it we can see how good was his mind, good as his heart, good as his dear personality. This is what I have aimed at making you clearly understand. If I have not entirely failed in my task, you now know the Father, his character, and his spirit; you have the keynote of his life and his work, of his personal sanctity, and of his action in the domain of souls. You know him and you love him! You have seen faith leading him to the Eucharist, and the Mystery of Love shedding upon him the resplendence of good-

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ness. You know how he abode in the Eucharist, and how the Eucharist abode in him. This is the whole plan of this imperfect discourse, which is, alas! infinitely below what your veneration and my gratitude for the Father exact.







